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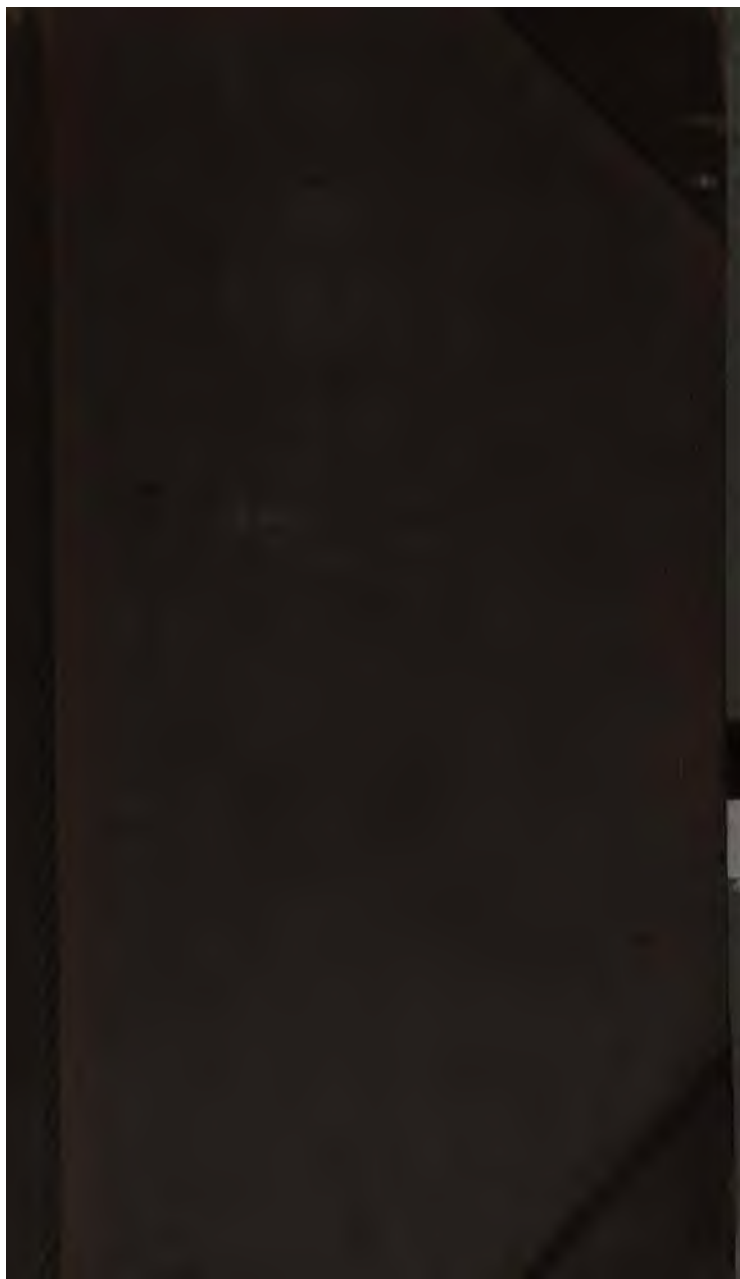
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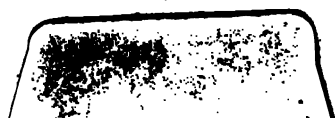
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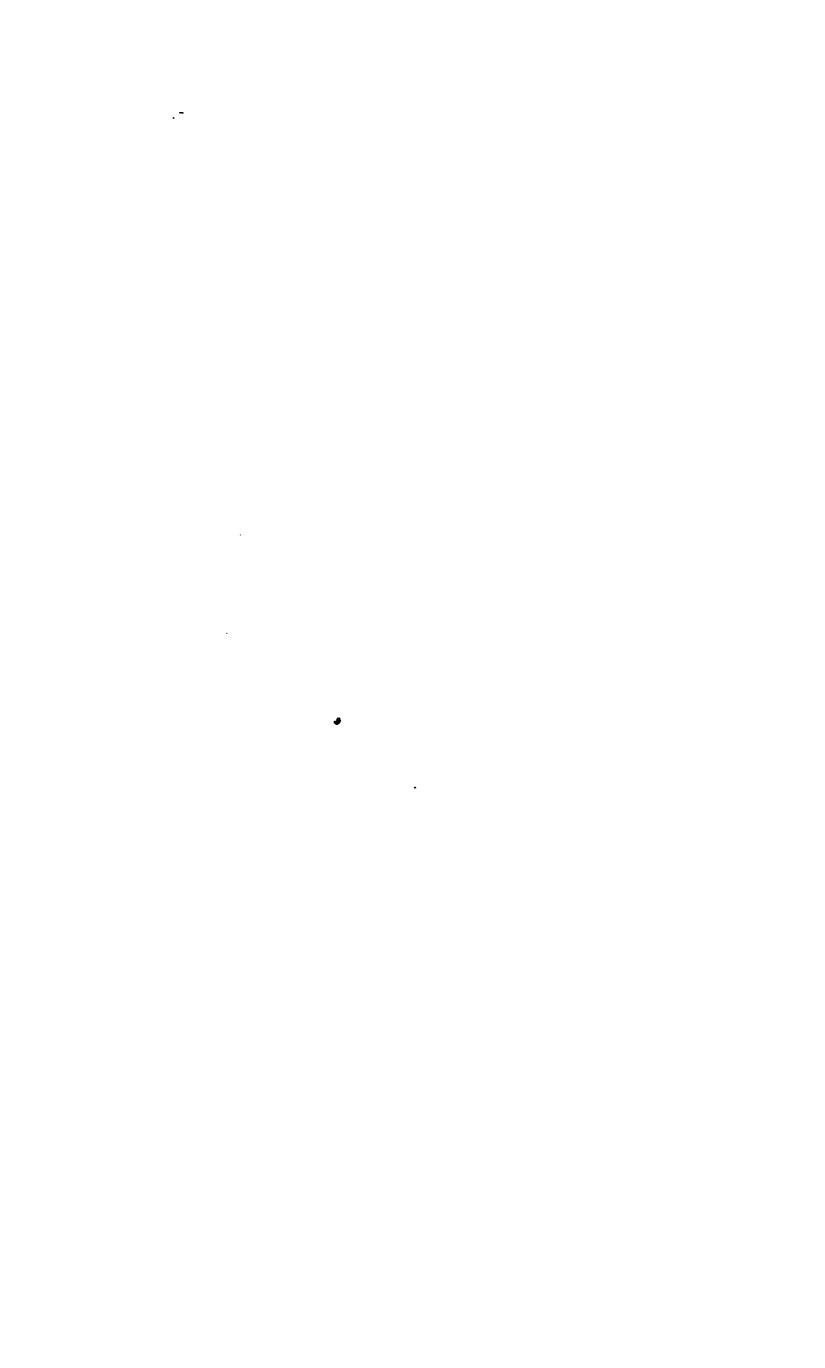
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TRACTS

FOR THE

CHRISTIAN SEASONS.



TRACTS

FOR THE

CHRISTIAN SEASONS.

VOL. II.

FROM THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER,
TO THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

OXFORD,
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TO
THE AUTHOR
OF
The Christian Year,
WHOSE HIGH CALLING
IT HAS BEEN TO KINDLE A NEW LOVE
FOR THE
SEASONS AND SERVICES OF THE CHURCH,
This Volume,
DESIGNED IN ITS HUMBLER MEASURE
TO FURTHER THE SAME GOOD END,
IS
MOST RESPECTFULLY
INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

WE have advanced another stage of our journey through the Christian year. Another volume of our work is brought to a close, and with like success. Our endeavours to help the Christian traveller along the old paths, where the shining footsteps of our forefathers in the faith may yet be traced, have met with no slight nor cold respond. In such success we discern a plain revelation of the growing love for the seasons and services of the Church. It was on this love that we built our hopes and made our venture; and we now rejoice to find that we erred rather in under-rating than in over-rating its strength and increase. Gladly therefore do we pursue our way, and gladly we renew our labours, being only the more *bent on bestowing* pains and care upon

a work which seems in some sort to supply general want, and which is designed to illustrate that great possession of our Church, the Book of Common Prayer.

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Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

Christ's entry into Jerusalem.

THIS week, containing in its events the last sufferings of our Lord and Saviour, opens with a very different prospect to the eye which will place itself amid His disciples on this day. They are full of triumphant exultation, as they behold their Master asserting publicly the character which, while He had enjoined them to confess it, He had commanded them not to publish, namely that of the Christ. And not their own voices only, but also that of an immense multitude which surrounded them, saluted Him as the mighty King, and shouted out, "Hosanna to the Son of David : Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord ; Hosanna in the highest." And the whole city was moved at His coming. Alas ! the humiliating reflection that on the sixth day from this He was led through the same city in a very different kind of procession to Calvary, and those disciples forsook Him and fled, and the multitude of that city having cried "crucify Him, crucify

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Him," attended Him to the cross. The occasion is remarkable indeed : it was the only one on which our Lord allowed Himself to be received with ensigns of earthly pomp. It was the only one in which He openly challenged His adversaries by an express and direct assertion of His real dignity. And it illustrated in Him, " who was the man of sorrows," the short and sudden burst of enjoyment and success which from its very brightness so continually announces to our foreboding hearts the approach of the darkness of suffering and sorrow. And while it exhibited in His person the uncertainty and changeableness of our condition, it gives us an example of the fickleness of our nature in that multitude which could change its note to the very contrary in so short a time.

Here is abundant matter for meditation. The only difficulty is to place in any order the thoughts which rise up in the heart in a tumult of affection as soon as we turn ourselves to it.

The first thing which will occur to the searcher of his own heart, will be the question, " What part should I have taken on that occasion, had I been present, not with my present knowledge indeed, but in my present prevailing disposition *of heart*. There were three parties present, His

disciples and the rejoicing multitude making one, and the lookers on making two, who were the curious, asking the question "Who is this," and the Pharisees indignantly demanding of our Lord to "rebuke His disciples." Among which of these should I have been found?

(1.) His disciples had followed Him faithfully up to this day. They had shared His perils, His necessities, on the sea and in the desert; they had clung to Him, while others had forsaken Him; and when He had asked them, "Will ye also go away?" answered through Peter as their spokesman, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Now how have I been following Him, and have I arrived in my heart at such a confession? If they had their peculiar path set out for following Him, so have I had mine. And whatever advantage they may have had by daily personal communication with Him, has not only been compensated to me by the means which I have had from my childhood of making Him familiar to my mind and present to my thoughts, through the reading of His Word, and the operation of His Spirit, and by that sense of reality which a *faithful stewardship* daily impresses more

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deeply upon the heart; but it has been overbalanced to me to an inestimable degree by the effects, moral and spiritual upon my heart, of events befalling Him of which they had not then been witnesses. And these point out to me my peculiar path of following. If they had trodden in His blessed steps through Galilee and Judea, and heard His word, and hungered and thirsted with Him, I have had to tread in His blessed steps also, as He walked to His cross and grave, as He rose from the dead, as He ascended into heaven. And have I so trodden? How have I performed the act of dying unto sin, in what have I mortified my members which are upon earth, crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, denied myself, and taken up my cross, presented my body a living sacrifice? What acts can I specify to myself of such a course as this? Am I at this moment conscious of walking in it with fixed purpose, and enjoying the effects of it in having risen from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, and so following Him in His resurrection, as I have followed Him in His death? Where then are traces of these steps, within and without? What is the state of my heart in secret, what is the example which I exhibit to my neighbours? Do I feel at this moment, as I should

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When the thought comes into my mind, both power and will in my heart to restrain every evil affection, to put down every unworthy thought, to subdue all unruly passions, and this from an abiding consideration that if I be Christ's I must mortify all the pride and lust of the old man, and quell it with all the vigour of the spiritual life of the new man? Have I immediately repressed the rising suggestion of uncharitableness, have I recalled the word of angry feeling before it escaped from my tongue, and been humbled that I should have allowed it to proceed even so far?

These are the daily trials of common life, and the most trifling of them will tell the heart's tendency, whether towards the end of the Christian race, or towards the end which worldlings pursue, as the straw thrown up shews the way of the wind. Nor is it possible for the man who has not first gained these little yet innumerable victories to gain the grand victory in the day of manifest trial and open temptation. These bring us the continued sense of the presence of Christ, for the struggle is begun under the solemn consciousness of His eye being upon us, and is finished under the joyful conviction that He has been present with His help. Thus we follow Christ, *thus we represent His disciples, who on*

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this day followed the Lord in an unwonted triumph. And the day will come when in our turn we shall be admitted to share in His triumph, if not by some conspicuous testimony of faith and love in this world, yet by being taken into the train of His saints in His glory on the last day. But vainly will that day be looked to as a day of rejoicing by any one who shall not in this his day be found a close and steady follower, and therefore, according to the direction of His word, treading with all circumspection in the steps of his Lord, and not bounding and skipping from this step to that more distant and agreeable one, as is the way with the hypocrites, who pick and choose out of the commandments of their Lord, but drawing foot regularly after foot through all the marks left by the example of his Lord, however close they may come, and however trifling they may seem. Little denials of self, little sacrifices of will, little triumphs over the passions of corrupt nature, form the steps of the course of general daily life. And he who neglects to tread in these, and waits and looks out for something more important, more spiritual as he may think, is sure to find in it not a step but a stumbling-block and stone of *offence*.

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(2.) The lookers on at the spectacle of this triumphant procession were partly strangers who had come up to the feast of the passover, or were the multitude of the city, which like all other cities had its crowds of idlers and babblers, ever on the look out for something new, and therefore gathered to the sight of our Lord's entry, as the eagles to the carcase. Born and bred as we have all been in the city of God, the new Jerusalem, His Church, we cannot be compared with the former division of this crowd. But may we not with the latter rabble? Alas! is there not rabble, idle rabble, more concerned with seeing something new and exciting than with doing something old and regular in the city of the Church of God? "Who is this?" cried that rabble in its impatient curiosity. Some perhaps, since the whole city was moved, and they heard the acclamations at the entry of a triumphant King, might have run to see if it were not the Christ indeed, who might be expected any day. But then, O the grievous disappointment of their carnal hearts. We may imagine them asking impatiently, as expecting an earthly king and worldly conqueror, "Where are His trumpets, timbrels and cornets? Where are His banners and flags? Where are His body-guards

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with their golden helmets and shields? Where is His triumphal chariot, to which conquered kings with crowns on their heads are harnessed instead of horses? Where is the long file of prisoners of war, following behind with their hands tied behind their backs? Where is He Himself, clothed with royal purple, with a crown of pure gold upon His head, and with a sceptre of ivory in His hand? Where are all these tokens which we expect if He be indeed the Christ? Who is this?"

Such a question it may appear strange to suppose coming from the mouth of any Christian, who should be allowed from his very profession to know Christ too well for him to have any doubt upon the matter. But let us not be content with mere outside, but examine more narrowly, and look inwardly. Most assuredly we shall then find that this question is asked by the hearts of too many.

What a numerous class in God's Church is that of mere sight-seers, of those, who even though they may affect spiritual things, are content with externals. And with how many does religion consist in following some religious novelties of the day, one after another as they arise. *Some cannot find any comfort to their hearts un-*

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less they find something new to their ears or eyes almost every day. Can Christ be seen in His true character by persons before whose eyes all things pass in such continual change? Can His steadfast, immutable example be estimated or followed by such? When therefore He is proposed to such in the regular attendance at church, in the continued and thankful reception of His Word and Sacraments there, in the diligent discharge of the daily and minute and obscure duties of the Christian stewardship, in the observant and painful watchfulness of the Christian soldier, in the regular plan of Christian life which is pursued by him who exercises the faith which worketh through love, and seems to go plodding on through a dull routine, and formal system; what wonder if they be offended, and cry out "Who is this?" But what a more numerous class still than this is that which has formed for itself a mere worldly and carnal view of Christian duty. It is too well known, and, it may be added, too well felt in that evil which it works among us, how much there is of careless indifference as to this matter. Could this day be so made unholy instead of holy, could its solemn assemblies be so deserted for worldly assemblies, could the road to church be left for the road to some

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haunt of worldly pleasure, could such things be witnessed in every neighbourhood, as they unhappily are, unless this antichristian spirit prevailed far and wide? And yet such persons would not give up the name and title of Christian. They will, almost all of them, attend now and then in their places before the Lord. But in what spirit do they come, what offering do they bring Him? Can they possibly bring Him that which alone will satisfy Him, that of the heart? No indeed. They consider all that concerns religion just as any thing else that has to do with the practice of the world. To the extent of a few forms it is the fashion of the world around them, and therefore with these forms, for the mere sake of respectability, they will comply. Their heart is carnal, it reverses the Lord's commandment of seeking first the kingdom of God, and thence expecting the things of the kingdom of this world to follow, in faith on His promise. Its grand concern is to provide for this life, and let the service of the Lord come in, as it may or can, at any opening which may arise out of their having nothing else to do. Thus man puts himself before God, earth before heaven, flesh before spirit, temporal before eternal, accidental before essential.

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Now when to such a heart as this comes forth a voice preaching, "Repent and believe the Gospel," and summoning it to rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, and to serve the Lord in newness of life: when that voice accuses it of unthankful disobedience, threatening it with the deadly wages of sin, on that day when the labourers in the service of Christ and in the service of Satan shall be severally paid off: when Jesus is proposed to it as the propitiation for our sins, in whom we must have faith that we may be saved, and must shew that faith by the love which fulfils His commandments, and strives after copying His example; when the same Jesus is proposed to it as Lord and King, demanding from it the first-fruits, and not the refuse of its service, and the surrender of its will to the sovereignty of His will; what does such a heart say to all this? And when again the same Jesus is proposed to it as the Judge of the quick and the dead, whom all must prepare to meet at His coming to take account of His servants, and to render unto every one according to that which he hath done in the body; when the thrones in heaven are shewn forth for the victorious saints above, and the chains and darkness of the pit for the impenitent *sinner*s below; when the true nature

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of sin is explained, and it is declared that all who are not striving against it are swimming with it, and that narrow is the gate which leadeth to eternal life ; when a voice is heard proclaiming all this, does not such a heart heave against it, and angrily cry out within itself, " Who is this ? " It will not believe that this is the Jesus Christ of whom he has heard so much, though seen so little. He cannot accept this person for Him on whom he has all his life long been looking upon merely as one who was, as a matter of course, to save him in the end, however little thought might have been bestowed upon Him in the meanwhile. He cannot believe that this is He whose friendship he has been thinking that he may secure, when it shall be needed, with an acquaintance made during the last few days or hours of life. " Who is this ? " What a very different person, he cries, from Him whom I looked for. How difficult it is to know Him, how laborious to serve Him, how hard to please Him. How earnestly He sets us to work, what a strict account He takes of our work. Is this the perfect freedom which was promised me ? Is this the Saviour, who will not save me from my sins without my forsaking them ? Is this work, so *full of watchfulness* and diligence, of fear and

trembling, the work of salvation, which I have been supposing that I may begin at my leisure, and finish in certainty? This is not the Christ whom I have always been holding. Where is the joy, the peace which was promised me? I see nothing but sorrow and trouble. Such is the language of the worldly-minded heart, which acknowledges Christ in name but not in nature. It is the very same disappointed heart which cried in the streets of Jerusalem, "Who is this?"

(3.) The class of self-deluders like these is more numerous than that of the hypocrites, which is the third. It was to the Pharisees that in the preparation for the Gospel John the Baptist cried out, Matt. iii. 7, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" And they were found here at the end as they were there at the beginning. They rebuke the Lord for the zealous behaviour of His disciples. So does hypocrisy blind the heart. And yet the step to it from self-delusion is immediate. And the great danger against which the careless self-deluder has to provide, after that he has professed to take religion seriously in hand, is this very hypocrisy.

Now in which of these classes, let the heart be asked, am I? *If not in any one entirely, may I*

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not be in all three partly? And what part should I have taken then with this heart as it is now? A deep and a serious question, for the answer to which the foregoing observations have been made. Blessed indeed are they, who having learned experience from continual examination of their hearts, and endeavoured to practise what they have been persuaded to believe, can cry out "Who is this?" in the full conviction which such persons as the holy Simeon felt. When transported with joy, on seeing their King coming unto them under the lowly shape in which they had expected Him, they could hardly trust their senses for the goodness of the news, and said to themselves, "Let me not be mistaken. Who is this? O yes, it is He that was to come. Hosanna to the Son of David." And such joy the truly spiritual heart experiences to the end of life, for Christ daily becomes to it more real, is daily apprehended with some new experience, is daily thanked for some new gift, is daily seen under a more glorious form in the heart, and therefore there goes up continually the same joyful cry, not of disappointment, but of more intimate and hearty recognition, "Who is this?"

But now to what does this procession of our *Lord* naturally direct our hearts forward? Is it

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not to the last day of the world, when like the earthly Jerusalem it shall be entered by the bright procession of the Son of Man coming again? On that day verily there shall be no complaints of His being wanting in glory. None shall ask "Where are His guards." They will be ten thousands of angels. None shall ask, "Where are His trumpets." They will be the last trumpet and voice of the archangel. None will ask, "Where is His train of prisoners." Sin, and death, and all the powers of darkness will then be led captive. None shall murmur at His riding upon an ass. "He will ride on the clouds of heaven, and every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." (Rev. i. 7.) Some may in this life hide Him from their eyes. But then neither hills nor mountains will avail them to cover Him from their sight, or them from His. But while the wicked will thus be compelled to see a spectacle which they before would never think of, the good shall see that which they have striven all along to see more clearly, and they shall see it face to face, and find it all perfection, all unclouded and eternal glory.

SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.

COLLECT.

O ALMIGHTY Father, whose dear and only-begotten Son, did as on this day openly proclaim Himself to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, entering Jerusalem at the head of His disciples, who strawed their garments in the way: Grant me grace, so to confess Him for the Christ in my heart and before men, and so to lay all my desires and will in all lowliness of obedience under His feet in the way of His commandments, that He may confess me also to Thee His Father in heaven, when at His second coming He shall enter the new and heavenly Jerusalem of His eternal kingdom, and lead His faithful followers into everlasting glory, where with Thee and the Holy Ghost He liveth and reigneth ever one God world without end.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

MONDAY BEFORE EASTER.

Christ curses the barren fig-tree, and drives the buyers and sellers out of the Temple.

ON the morning of the second day of the week, Jesus is on His way from Bethany, a small village at the foot of mount Olivet, where He now lodged the night under the roof of Lazarus. And the very first incident of this day takes place, not in Jerusalem, whither He was going to spend the day in fulfilling the last week of His ministry, but on the road to it. And a most remarkable one it is. Our Lord sees a fig-tree by the way-side, which promised so fairly by its appearance of leaves, that He went up to it, to look for fruit. But He found nothing but leaves. He then addressed it in those awful words, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever."

It stood by the way-side to such as were going up to Jerusalem. And verily its example stands by the way-side, that none may overlook it on their road to the Jerusalem which is above. Come

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and see therefore all ye travellers on that road, all ye that profess to set your faces as if ye would go up to that glorious city. Come and learn the terrible warning which your Saviour hath given, as on this very day of this season. If the cross on Calvary calls you all to repentance and faith, and proclaims the beginning and end of your course, so this fig-tree on the way-side tells you most solemnly of something on your course. Blasted with the curse of barrenness it bids all the professors of repentance and faith to look most anxiously to the bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. Let us then go into the circumstances of so remarkable an incident.

The nature of the fig-tree is singular in this point. The fruit sets and grows before the leaves shoot. Now in this fig-tree the leaves had already come. Therefore our Lord naturally said to Himself, "I ought to find fruit upon this tree, for the leaves are come out. And it cannot yet have been gathered, for the fig-season has not yet arrived." He went up to it therefore with the reasonable expectation of finding fruit upon it. How grievous then was the disappointment, when He found nothing but leaves. It was then that He cursed it as barren and unprofitable. And *when His disciples came by on the next morning*

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they found that the curse had been most surely and miserably fulfilled. It had withered away.

Since this is not the only occasion on which our Lord compares His followers to the fig-tree, but also elsewhere (Luke xiii. 6) admonishes them from it of the danger of being cut down and cast out of God's vineyard for unprofitableness, we should look narrowly into the comparison. And then the first thing that will strike our minds will be something like this. The fig-tree, like every other tree, has two channels of nourishment, the root and the leaves. Through the root it draws from the fatness of the soil, and receives the sap which is the very well-spring of life. So that the root is to the plant very much what the stomach is to man, who is thence supplied in every nerve and vein with the means of life. Again, through the leaves the tree draws nourishment from the air, and they do the same office for the plant that the lungs do for the man. And the bearing of the fruit depends upon the proper proportion in which these two offices work. If the root draw too much nourishment, rankness of leaves takes the place of fruit. And, on the other hand, if the leaves be too thin, the fruit soon withers away, both from want of the due supply of *nourishment which comes through the leaves*,

and from the lack of shelter from the excess of sun and rain. These two circumstances are common indeed to all trees. But Christians are in the Church of God, and therefore compared to trees which are carefully grown in a garden, and not to such as grow wild on forests and mountains, as the oaks on the hills of Bashan, and the cedars on the sides of Lebanon. Now therefore let us apply the comparison to ourselves.

As members of the Church of God must we not apply two distinct means of spiritual nourishment. Is there not in us the inward and secret, working like the root, which is hidden from outward sight in the ground? Assuredly there is that part which we call the heart, the mind, the spirit, the inner man, through which we have communication with God Himself, to whom faith, which dwells in this part, draws us near, and in whom love, dwelling here also, establishes us. Wherefore St. Paul prays that the Ephesians (iii. 17) may be "rooted and grounded in love," and bids the Colossians (ii. 7) be "rooted and built up in Christ Jesus." It needs not to be said that here lies the fountain-head of all spiritual life. That cannot come from any other source than communion with God, and with our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who is the life of man. And it

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cannot be maintained in any other way than through the inward and secret working of God's Holy Spirit on His part, and through faith, working by love, on our part.

Again there is the outward and visible, answering to the leaves which do their work in the open air before our eyes. This is the outward conduct of the Christian's life in respect of his neighbours, who see him and have to deal with him, and the manner of his communication with the means of grace supplied to him by the visible ordinances of the Church, and the quality of his stewardship of the opportunities of the world around him. All these (we well know, it is to be hoped, from good experience) afford us continual supplies of spiritual nourishment, if properly used. Thus, as to the Church, we draw upon the outward ministration of God's Word and Sacraments. But did we confine ourselves to this, and not join with it the forementioned inward means, and in their proper fulness, we should be mere formalists, like the Pharisees, and should be exactly in the circumstances of the leafy and showy, but barren fig-tree. Thus again as to our example to our neighbours, we receive from it influence and encouragement, which if we turn to worldly interests *and to love of the praise of men*, we are again as

the showy and barren fig-tree. And thus again as to our stewardship of that which the world brings us, from victory over its trials we derive confidence, and have to beware of self-reliance and boastfulness ; and from application of its opportunities, we have to promote the service of the honour and glory of God, and must beware of seeking our own selfish interests, and worldly ambition.

The heart then is the root. Let us look well to that. In His infinite mercy towards us God hath planted it in the ground of His Church, where it may draw upon all the fatness of its heavenly and spiritual soil. In our baptism we were planted here, that we may take root in the love of God and in our Lord Jesus Christ. And it becomes us well to consider whether we indeed be thus consciously rooted ; whether we be indeed deriving continual spiritual nourishment, from having our hearts set upon the things which are above, preserving Christ's continual presence by serious meditation, securing His continual help by instant prayer. What does our conscience say to this matter ? If fairly brought to the bar by daily examination, as it ever should be, and more than ever at such an awakening season as *this*, it will tell us the truth. And without hav-

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ing its answer we can do nothing. We are as a man in the dark, who knows neither where he is, neither where he may be in the next moment. In fact this examination does for us exactly what that power of discernment which God gives to the root, that it may refuse the evil and choose the good juices of the soil, does for the tree. If therefore we be not men of self-examination, of meditation, of prayer, through the access in Christ, our root is not doing its duty, it is leaving us to be supplied from the outward world around us in so improper a proportion, that all and the very best that we shall be able to shew for ourselves will be mere outward profession: and that inward confession, for which the Lord will look in the day of visitation, will be wanting, and we shall receive sentence accordingly.

It is not indeed possible that the outward profession should be any thing but unprofitable, however boastful, where the inward confession is lacking, and therefore it may be thought unnecessary to go on to any observations upon it. But we must remember that our inward feeling can never be depended upon, even by ourselves, unless tested by outward fact. It is vain to persuade ourselves of inward holiness without holy conversation, of inward love to Christ without out-

ward love to our neighbour, of inward repentance without outward humility, of faith without works, and of being joined inwardly to Christ without the application of those outward ordinances which He has Himself instituted, and commanded us to use. Christ did not find fault with the leaves in themselves. The tree could not have borne fruit without them. What angered Him was that He found nothing but leaves. And our outward profession therefore is the very reason why Christ should assure us, on our very own shewing, to be His, and to look for fruit. By it we cry out to Him, as He goes by, "Here are the meet fruits of repentance for Thee." And if He had this challenge from the fig-tree on the roadside, would He not have had it still more urgently from the fig-tree which grew in the vineyard? Its very position there would be a challenge of the most unqualified kind. O then what a direct, what a fearless challenge are we making to Him from our places in the Church of God, and how disgraceful to be found out in such an audacious lie as having nothing to offer Him after we have so pressingly invited Him to come up to us.

Thus mere outward profession is a continual lie unto the Lord, and provokes His curse upon *us*. *Hear how He rebuked Israel for such false*

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dealing with Him. (Isa. i.) “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth: they are a trouble to Me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean.”

Here is the curse on the fig-tree given at large and in its application to man, only that it is not for ever. And this difference surely makes our position only the more awful. We find here the enumeration of the several particulars of the public worship of Israel. And the offering of these, as having been ordained by God's own especial order, should have been fruit most acceptable to Him. It proved however but barren leaves. And now remark, why? Because they brought not their hearts with them. They had been circumcised in the flesh: but they gave Him not the circumcision of the heart, and therefore as that fundamental ordinance was made barren, so were all the rest. In the same way therefore, if we make *not good our baptismal profession*, and

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faithfully use our baptismal grace, we make barren all the other ordinances of the Church. If we be not striving to make real in us the death unto sin, the new birth unto righteousness, the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, of what avail to us can be the most scrupulous observance of all the rest of the ordinances of Christ and His Church? They surround us with a show of barren leaves only, and provoke our disappointed Master's indignation. Alas! alas! how numerous (it is awful to think) is the class of fruitless fig-trees. How many Christians are there living in the world as if they had been dedicated to it, instead of having renounced it. And when reminded of the real nature of their profession, they will not be persuaded that they have bound themselves to a service of such high seeking and constant endeavour, of such watchful resistance to the world which they serve, to the flesh which they indulge, to the devil with whom they parley. And even when they stand as godfathers, and make in the child's name the same solemn vow which has been already made in theirs, how seldom are they affected by such an awakening position, how little does the heart seem to second what *the mouth* pronounces. The ceremony passes off

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as one of mere form without inward substance. Verily the veil is before their eyes.

But alas, if the heart be thus in the rank soil of the corruption of the sinful world and rebellious flesh, it must produce something much worse still than the barren leaves of the insincere profession of Christ, which of itself, it seems, is enough to provoke His curse. What then must be His judgment, in the day of His visitation on that "something much worse?" The very thought should amaze us with fear and confusion. If a false profession is abominable in His sight as a denial of His all-seeing eye, as an affront upon His power, as a tempting of His ever-present arm, what must be the open and direct abandonment of it, which so many make by their ungodly lives? To the heart then, to the heart let all go, as to the root of all in which they have any true and lasting concern. If its love be not of God, if its faith be not in Christ, if its hope be not of eternal life, if its fear be not of offending our Father which is in heaven, if its joy be not in serving Him, if its peace be not that of a conscience purged from dead works by the blood of Christ: but, on the contrary, if its love be set on earthly things, its faith be in the world, its hope be *of this life only*, its fear be of offending man,

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its joy be in the flesh, its peace be that of a conscience seared by wounds which impenitence has allowed to fester, where is it then rooted indeed, and what fruit can it bear? "Where is it?" Such must be our daily watchword. And of this we may be certain, that if we know not where it is, it must be in the wrong place.

This dealing of our Lord with the fig-tree is a most apt introduction to that which He did when He had entered Jerusalem. There, in no long time afterwards, He stood amidst the professed people of God, and on the very spot of their most showy profession. He entered the Temple, and a most imposing spectacle was there indeed. The building itself was as magnificent as skill, working most artfully and at a most costly price in gold, silver, brass, in cedar, ivory, and marble could make it. But where was the inward substance which should be expressed by all this care concerning the outward form? Where was the temple of the pure heart among this people? There were clouds of smoke of burnt offerings, crowds of priests, throngs of worshippers. But where was the mercy which God preferred to sacrifice, because it gave it its real meaning? Where was the obedience which the Lord *preferred to the fat of rams*, in the offering of which

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it was so essentially implied? There were seen the scribes with books in their hands containing the letter of Scripture. But where was the spirit? There were the Pharisees with their long robes and phylacteries, and sorrowful faces. But where was the heart, which humbled itself that it might be exalted? There was music and song, uttering the sounds of praise and prayer, loud and sweet. But where was the contrite and thankful heart? The show was goodly indeed. All seemed to have been most studiously contrived to set forth the honour and glory of God. And who would have blamed the show had it been sincere? Thus this fig-tree, this general representative of all the fig-trees in God's Church, shewed abundance of leaves, put on a most inviting appearance.

And did the Lord Jesus, who had been so disappointed early on this day in satisfying His bodily hunger from the fig-tree, and was now spiritually hungry for the opportunity of joining heart with fellow-worshippers (for it was probably the hour of morning sacrifice) and offering to His heavenly Father in His own house the tribute of prayer and praise, and of receiving into His human nature the heavenly and spiritual food *which was there* conveyed to the heart of

the worshipper: did He meet with disappointment here also? He did indeed. Amid all this outward show of devotion they were holding a market in the courts of the Lord's house, and were turning the house of prayer into a den of thieves. So, as He had pronounced the doom of the fig-tree He was about to pronounce the doom of the Temple, and of all that worshipped in it. And as that doom came to pass, so was this about coming to pass as surely and irreversibly.

Here is a lesson for our hearts if we would keep them as temples in which Christ shall dwell by faith and the Holy Spirit through grace of sanctification. Let us tremble at the example which that people of God, which abused their Temple, presents to us. We wonder how they could come to such a mind as thus to violate the common decency of religious observance, and treat the Holy One of Israel with such heartless irreverence. But shall we continue to wonder after we have considered that nothing so hardens the heart, and makes it insensible even to the common sense and feeling which religion demands, as a life led after an inconsistent profession. It becomes blinded by such deceitfulness so as to be deprived of the very use of judgment on spiritual *matters*. It grows insensible to the force of

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heavenly truth, and so can neither perceive nor obey that truth. Have we not before now, alas ! heard of persons, if we have not met them, who, from indulging in the habit of speaking falsehood, have in course of time become unable to distinguish truth from falsehood. A life of insincere profession has the same effect on men, only on a much larger scale, and with still more awful consequences. They grow insensible to the fact of its insincerity, quite indifferent to its discordance with the rule of true godliness. And thus is verified in false Christians now that which was verified in false Israelites then, "Hearing they hear and do not understand : and seeing they see and do not perceive."

Such is the terrible lesson afforded by the events of this day. It is full of threatening and preparation for judgment. It gives us a foretaste, even amidst the fullest exhibition of the love of our Lord, of His character as Judge. We see that, if as a Saviour He can feel for us, pity us, love us, smile upon us with mercy and goodness, and bless us : so, as a Judge, He can feel against us, vent His indignation upon us, exhibit to us a countenance of terrifying severity, and dismiss us with a curse into the everlasting *fire prepared for the devil and his angels*. Now

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therefore while all have ears to hear let them hear, and let all while yet He may be found seek Him with all earnestness, If He be not found by us as our Saviour in this world, whom we may follow to the end, He will be found as our condemner in the world to come, from whose presence we shall be driven in everlasting shame.

DEVOTION.

HOLY Jesus, who hast planted us in Thy vineyard that we might bear fruit to the relief of our neighbour and to Thy glory, suffer not the juices of Thy grace to dry up in our souls and our souls to wither. Cause us to abide in Thee, who art the true Vine, whence we draw spiritual life ; knit us unto Thyself ; pour forth Thy Spirit into all the branches of the vine, that the boughs thereof may be found full of fruit when Thou comest to look for fruit. As we are now rooted within the borders of Thy kingdom by Thy grace, grant, we beseech Thee, the continuance of Thy love, that we be not plucked up by the roots and condemned as unfruitful members at Thy coming. Leave us not, forsake us not, withdraw not the light of Thy countenance, shine Thou upon us, Thou sun of righteousness.

Increase faith, good Lord, warm love, strengthen hope, promote purity, quicken us in righteousness, ripen godliness, mature zeal, deepen penitence. Let not the time of fruit-bearing pass without strength to bring fruit to perfection ; enable us to *do Thy will* and to bear witness to

our union with Thee, that we may refresh Thine eyes in the vintage when Thou comest to gather in Thy fruit in its season.

We see, O Lord, Thine anger when Thou hast planted a tree and it beareth nothing but leaves. May we ever keep this Thy wrath in remembrance, when we are tempted to waste our gifts in our short day of grace and to pass our time as men of this world who labour not for Thee. It is a fearful thing to draw down upon us Thy heavy wrath. It is a fearful thing to undo the good work which Thou hast begun in us, and to raise Thy fiery indignation against us for our unprofitableness. Who can abide Thy wrath, the vials of Thine everlasting wrath, the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched? Most terrible will be Thy vengeance on all faithless and fruitless members.

Great and unsearchable as has been Thy love, so great and fearful will be Thy wrath for the spurning of such love. At great cost hast Thou planted us in Thy vineyard; great labour hast Thou bestowed upon us; with great love didst Thou labour; even with a bloody sweat didst Thou toil. Thy blood was as the dew, Thy blood as the rain which has caused us to grow. *Thou hast spared no pains; Thou sparest not*

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Thyself. O suffer us not, then, to fall away ; let not our enemy weaken us. We now tread the courts of Thy earthly house and visit Thy temple ; we now dwell in Thy presence and are within reach of Thy gifts. O grant that we may so love, so use the holy places upon earth, the place where Thine honour dwelleth, that we may be raised up to the better temple, the house eternal in the heavens, the enduring house of Thy glory, where Thou art in the fulness of Thy majesty and glory with the Father and the Holy Ghost, to whom be all honour and glory. Amen.

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THE PENITENT'S PRAYER.

O LORD, a sinner darkly dyed,
Long wandering from his Father's side,
Now at Thy feet a suppliant lies,
With broken heart and streaming eyes.

A bruise'd, a lost, a dying sheep,
Fain to the Shepherd's arms would creep ;
Though once that Shepherd's arms were spurned,
It seeks the breast from which it turned.

Still homeward with repentant feet
I haste, a Father's face to meet ;
For in Thy sternest, saddest guise,
Some love may linger in Thine eyes.

Though wounded, torn, and sore defiled,
Say not Thou wilt not know Thy child ;
Midst all the shame, the stains of earth,
Is there no trace of heavenly birth ?

Not hopeless do I lift my prayer,
Some remnant of Thy love to share ;
Though of myself too weak to plead,
The cross supplies the strength I need.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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The fig-tree is found withered—Jesus argues with the Pharisees in the Temple—Pronounces the destruction of the Temple.

WE have risen to a day of still increasing interest and awfulness, as we look to the events which mark this week in the history of our Lord. Yesterday we were summoned to be present at a sentence of condemnation on a mere representative of human unprofitableness. To-day we are summoned to witness both the execution of that sentence and a sentence of condemnation on an actual criminal. And the terrible solemnity of this latter event is increased by the manifest preparation of the former, which assures us that it shall as surely be executed, as was the sentence on the fig-tree. The whole day, in short, is one of a most important trial. A whole nation, God's chosen people, are brought to the bar in the most solemn court upon earth, in the house of the Lord; and the trial ends with the *passing of sentence of death*: and we

are invited to enter the court, and be present at the trial. How many have risen early and pushed their eager way through jostling crowds to hear a trial of surpassing interest in its day. Here is a trial of surpassing interest to every member of the Church of God throughout all lands and all generations to the end of the world. Shall we not enter in and hear?

(1.) The Judge is already on His way to the court. Let us put ourselves in His train. We meet Him on His way from Bethany, and now we are come to the place of the fig-tree. But where is it? Hear Peter crying out, "Master! behold the fig-tree which Thou cursedst is withered away." And hear the Lord's answer, "Have faith in God."

Those whom it represented had not faith in God, as will appear from the evidence of this day's trial, to which we are hastening on, and therefore will only stay to make a remark or two. Melancholy enough in itself is the view of the shortness of our stay in this world. Men's "days are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more:" says the Psalmist. But how much more melancholy *when we think of any one being taken away in*

a state of impenitence, when he may be compared to this fig-tree which yesterday was so green and flourishing, and to-day is dried up from the roots and withered away. And yet men will go on sinning, thinking to repent in their last hours. But how suddenly may these come, and how suddenly also may they go, not leaving even so much time as was given to the fig-tree : perhaps but a few moments : perhaps not one. Besides, every day's advance in sin throws the day of repentance further off, and the further in proportion to the wilfulness and knowledge with which transgression is made. And what clearer proof of wilfulness and knowledge can there be than the prospect of repentance accompanying the act of transgression. And yet to such blindness can men come, that they will in their last moments console themselves with the memory of this delusive intention of repentance, and put it against the sin. But the effect of the indulgence in sin sometimes shews itself in a way which cannot be mistaken. Though we meet with men of whom we feel a moral certainty that they never can effectually repent, except something like a miracle of grace should be vouchsafed, yet charity is always ready to put down the horrible *thought*. Their understanding is

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clear: so that the door of possibility is still open for an alarmed conscience and affected heart, and therefore we are fain to hope for the best. But when the effects of sin are manifest in injured faculties, when that part of man is gone, on which alone conviction of heavenly truth can work, what a dreadful spectacle is before us, what a fulfilment of the doom of this fig-tree. Thus we may see fig-trees already beginning to wither under the terrible curse, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever;" all probability, and sometimes we might almost say, even possibility, of their ever awakening to the service of the Lord, being removed for ever.

So speaks this fig-tree from its withered branches and blasted leaves. Shall they not be continually before our eyes to warn us? And before our eyes they will continually be, if we be but on the right road, and in the right company. For the right road for us all is that which leads to the heavenly Jerusalem, the everlasting city of the living God, where is the Temple of His celestial presence. And the right company is that of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is leading His disciples thither, not to see Him suffer on the cross, but to behold Him glorified upon the throne of His everlasting kingdom. "Turn not away from this road (it

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cries out to us) but persevere in it, that you may flourish in the courts of your God for ever."

(2.) And now we enter the court, and Israel is put upon trial. Every advantage is afforded him. He is represented in those of his children whom he himself at that day would choose for his representatives, men who professed a zeal for God and for His law. For such were the Pharisees : men whom our Lord Himself asserted to be lawfully filling Moses' seat : men who were the heads and boast of the nation, the chief priests, the scribes, the elders. What an imposing crowd of criminals : yet out of their own mouth He condemns them. He convicts them of leaves of boastful profession and of emptiness of fruit of true service. They are allowed the utmost freedom of speech, even to the cross-questioning of their Judge, and the very spirit of their questions convicts them. Read the evidence of this trial as it is given in the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd chapters of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Then you will perhaps fall upon something like the following considerations.

It sometimes happens in a trial that the criminal accuses his witnesses, and by his very charges only establishes his own guilt. It was thus also with the Pharisees. *They demand Christ's an-*

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thority, and thus convict themselves of wilful blindness, and of a determination not to be persuaded. So Jesus gives them a foretaste of condemnation in refusing to answer them, and in setting forth parables, the threats of which they could not misunderstand, however they may pretend to be indifferent to them. Now have we not to beware lest this spirit possess us? When the heart of man feels reproof, is he not apt to turn round upon his reprover, and demand why he thus takes upon himself? He is then stung by it, and not warned. He is made worse instead of better. He is like the man who has injured his constitution, and on whom therefore the blow, which only rouses good humour in the healthy man, makes a painful smart, and irritates his temper. Let us judge ourselves therefore by this test of bearing reproof. Never was it more required than in these days of despising all authority, and more especially spiritual. If we will not endure it, either our conscience is sore, or our heart is hardened, or, as generally happens, both are in fault. What did David say? "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me: it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break mine head." Here in *fact* lies the grand concern of the Christian's life,

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the proof of the sincerity of his repentance. If the righteous smite him with it, they pour healing oil into the wounds which they inflict on the heart of the true penitent, and humble in order to exalt. They send him to a more humble and hearty confession of his sin, and thence arises a deeper feeling of the Saviour's love, and truer appreciation of the taste of the overflowing cup of His comfort. And they are the first to receive him back into their arms, as soon as they are assured that they have spurred him to repentance, and not stung him to rebelliousness. And if the wicked smite him, then again he is humbled to deep repentance, if he shall have given the least cause, however inadequate, for their charges ; and even if perfectly clear in the world's eye, he will commit his heart to a sharp self-examination, out of which he cannot but come much improved in the spirit of his mind. And if we be not proud pharisees, but humble disciples of the Lord, we shall never want for reprovers, set by that blessed Master in our own hearts, if nowhere else, and therefore shall never fail of improvement. But alas ! what is the sound continually around us, even in the Church of God ? Is it not a demand of authority ? Is it not the angry answer of impatience of rebuke ? And to such a pitch has this

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corrupt spirit come, that parents can be so foolish, not to say wicked, as to take up the cause of their children when they are in disgrace with their teachers. O yes! reproof is the last thing which the unchristian heart will bear, while it is the very first thing which the Christian heart will thankfully acknowledge. Beware therefore of the leaven of the Pharisees, as thou wouldst beware of their judgment. They *felt* the reproof, and would have laid hands on Jesus in that same hour, if they durst. Do thou feel reproof, and fall at the feet of that Jesus in humbleness of heart, nor fear to confess thy fault to thy accuser.

But a criminal, or at least his counsel, is disposed not only to accuse the witnesses, but also to endeavour to perplex them, and wring out admissions and contradictions from them, in short, to entangle them in their talk. So did the Pharisees and Sadducees act by our Lord. This declared the hopelessness of their conversion even more strongly than the foregoing conduct, because it shewed that levity and irreverence upon a subject which is commonly exhibited when the mind has been made up, and yet with a secret and sore feeling that it has not been justly made up, and when therefore it seeks to *shake off* upon the opponent that contempt which

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it cannot but feel for itself. Hence a desperate state of mind, which will stop short of no unfairness or iniquity. It finds its very defence in it. Therefore it is that infidels are always mockers, and scoffers. And see we not too many of them also around us in these latter times?

But you are not one of these. Yet have you never felt an unwillingness to do some point of your duty, as conscience bade you? And then have you not resorted to quibbling with the commandment, and wished to doubt whether it had ever been given at all, and then, if obliged to allow that it had been given, whether given in the sense in which your conscience is interpreting it against your will, and whether in any way it can be so binding as not to admit of exceptions? Thus you will have endeavoured to perplex the clearness of the Lord's word to you, to wring out of it an inconsistency which will suit your double-minded purpose; you will have made objections to it, you will have tried to entrap it into admissions which may prove fatal to its authority with you. In short, you will have taken counsel how you might entangle Him in His talk. For an example, only see how comfortably persons can excuse themselves from observing the most positive and *essential institutions* of His Church,

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namely public worship and the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. And if any power of quibble can set them free in such plain cases, what must it do in the rest, the greater number of which are left by the Lord's word more to the inference of an unblinded understanding and acceptance of a good conscience. O yes! Pharisees and Sadducees, as to this view of things, abound among us. And since as long as a man is an impenitent sinner he will defend or excuse his sin, how many, alas! are included in the fearful trial of this day.

And now what is the sum of the evidence? The people of God are, in the persons of the Pharisees and Sadducees, convicted of denying Jesus for the Christ, of listening to neither John nor Him, of being faithless husbandmen in the vineyard of God's Church, and murderers of His servants and of His Son, of refusing to attend the wedding-feast of His Son, of maliciously endeavouring to entangle Him in His talk, that they may get a handle of accusation against Him, and so compass His death. They are convicted of hypocrisy, of tampering with the word of God, of being unfaithful teachers, of shutting out the people from the kingdom of heaven, while they *will not enter themselves*. Such is the indict-

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ment made good against them, now at the end of the three years which He had given them for repentance. What remains now but to pass the sentence for cutting this fig-tree down, and suffering it no longer to cumber the ground.

Let us not however go further before taking the proper warning from all this. If such charges could be made good against faithless Jews, cannot they also against faithless Christians? And since these latter have had so much more light, how much deeper must be their condemnation. If they do these things in the green tree, what will they do in the dry? Let us then put ourselves on our trial every day, and judge ourselves that we be not judged of the Lord. Let us enquire of ourselves, "Are you following without any double-dealing the plain commandments of the Lord, and, if you admit of any quibble, can you have any true relish for His service, and can you possibly love Him? Love requires essentially an open heart. It cannot admit of reserve or of the least deceit. On the first thought held back from Him you shut your heart against Him; and who shall say how fast or how long? From such a beginning may come all the rest of the sins which stand in the *forementioned* list. You may then

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readily go on to unfaithfulness of service, to neglect of calls, to open breach of commandments, and end in crucifying Christ afresh. Take therefore your heart to task every day, unravel every day the threads of self-deceit, otherwise they will become a heap of entanglement which will defy all unravelling, and in your last hours you will cry in affright and despair at the business which lies before you, unable to find a clue to begin with. Can a Christian's day be such as to pass without confession to Almighty God? Can he avail himself of that access which Christ hath procured to the Father without a consciousness of having striven to confess with deeds no less than with words the Lord who bought him, and without the confession of the short-comings with which the perfect sense of the commandment rebukes his imperfect performance? When you have suffered a day to pass without a look back upon it, as to the place which it takes in your account before God, or, seeing that the account is against you, shut up your books, like the despairing creditor, not daring to look into them, or endeavour to falsify that account, by setting this palliation, and that excuse, against it, then look over the *forementioned* indictment of the Pharisees, and

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tremble lest you also find the Lord your God a consuming fire.

(3.) The trial is over. The Judge has quitted the court. But only to pronounce sentence from a more appropriate spot, where the Temple and city could be seen in one view standing as it were at the bar before Him. He takes Mount Olivet for His bench ; around Him are His twelve Apostles enjoying the earnest of the promise of sitting on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And yet even they could hardly believe their ears, as He was pronouncing sentence ; for a little while ago, when they were quitting the Temple in which He had forewarned them of its doom, they had incredulously pointed out to Him the size of the stones, and the immensity of its structure, as much as to say "Is it possible that such a building should become a heap of ruins with not one stone left upon the top of another?" And truly there was some reason for their slowness of belief on this matter, for such a building makes all the buildings of later times, even our largest Cathedrals, like the work of a child's play in comparison. For several stones of the sanctuary were themselves of the size of a small house, being forty-five cubits *in length*, five in height, and six

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in breadth. To us however, who judge at this distance, all this extraordinary magnificence only makes the exact fulfilment of the sentence more terrible and a more signal proof of the truth of His word who pronounced its doom. Some of the most celebrated national temples of the heathen are yet standing, as the Pantheon at Rome and the Parthenon at Athens. God has allowed the houses of false gods to stand before our eyes, while His own has not left traces by which its situation can be discovered. Can there be a greater reproof of the unworthiness of those who worshipped in it, and of the severity with which He will visit His own people?

On the ruins of this Temple has risen the Church of the latter times : not a bodily building, with foundations carefully laid upon the solid rock : but a spiritual building, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. (Ephes. ii. 20.) And in this structure, all the stones have life, being the members of the body of Christ, to whom St. Peter says, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Christ Jesus." Being spiritual it is therefore immortal, and so far from

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pronouncing its future destruction, the Lord hath said of it, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. So that we have a temple which cannot be destroyed, we have an High Priest whom no accident of this world can remove, we have a sacrifice which no revolution can ever cause to cease.

Most glorious, most encouraging assurances are these. But then we must bear anxiously in mind that although the whole building must endure for ever, yet particular parts of it may be destroyed and replaced. Within two days after this, Judas, one of the very body of Apostles on whom the foundations are laid, was removed, and another stone put in his place. How much more readily then may our places, which are in the upper and less important courses of the building, be lost to us. Need therefore have we indeed to take warning from the sentence which Christ pronounced as upon this day. And that we might not think ourselves unconcerned in its doom, and might not boast against our predecessors, He has mingled His threats of coming in judgment on that Temple with His coming in judgment on this world, which ought to have been a temple for men to worship in, but has been turned *by them* into a market-place and den

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of thieves. Therefore not one stone shall be left upon another, but its "heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Such is the end to which our hearts are directed by the solemn trial and dreadful sentence of this day. And indeed in any case does the person who is seriously engaged in any work keep his views short of the end? Is not the sailor ever intent upon the haven to which he is bound? Has not the builder always the completion of his plan in his mind? Does not the end regulate the course of every earthly work that deserves the name of work? Shall it then be different in spiritual work? It cannot be begun until the end is acknowledged and determined upon. And he that would advance in it must have that directly in sight before him, as the runner has the mark at the end of the race. We must therefore have the singleminded perseverance of the blessed apostle St. Paul, who says of himself, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We must unfix our sight from the

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things of the transitory temple of this world, and fix them on the things of the everlasting temple of the world to come. We must desire to understand them, we must strive to attain them, as far as can be done while we are here. We must gain a taste for them by that enjoyment of their earnest, which the Lord gives to all sincere seekers. But how are such earnest too often disregarded when their promise appears in the outward and visible shape of the ordinances of God's Church. How shall they who neglect these be enabled to lay hold of and enjoy the inward and more distant? To take a familiar example, how shall they who feel no enjoyment in the assembly of the people of God, on the day of the Lord, have any enjoyment of the general assembly of angels and the redeemed in heaven? So easy is it, if we be but sincere and single minded, to bring ourselves to task, and to see whether we be really looking forward to the end, and endeavouring to be prepared for it. Let us thus bring ourselves to the test of a few solid facts of our practice, and not trust to the mere feelings of the hour, as some do; for those feelings, unless they are stirred up by practice, can have nothing solid in them; and in committing ourselves to *them*, we are attempting to fly in

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the air, and not to run our race upon earth. Do not, for instance, too many flatter themselves with the loving Christ, who shew very insufficient tokens of its most necessary accompaniment, the love of their neighbour? Had it the power of reason and speech the fig-tree might have argued most speciously from its overflowing juice and abundance of leaves. But our Lord judged after a much more simple and practical way. He looked for fruit. So His question with us is, not, how are you feeling, but what are you doing? If you be really doing, you will entertain the proper feeling. But if you be only feeling, you are in danger of resting content there, and never going on to doing. Do not stop therefore to look at yourself, but look at that which is before you, at that prize which you must win or lose. Do not buy and sell in the temple of God's Church, by setting off feeling against practice, or light and showy duties against laborious and obscure, but use it as the place of presenting your body a living sacrifice. Then if the Lord should come suddenly to His temple, you will rejoice. Otherwise what will be more dreadful than your surprise.

DEVOTION.

O LORD Jesu, who hast made us parts of Thy living temple, Thou Thyself being the chief corner-stone, preserve us among the living stones of Thy house. Grant us to continue in the holy place ; heal the breaches that have been made by the evil one, our enemy ; fill up whatsoever hath been decayed by the fraud and malice of the devil or by our own carnal will and frailness. We have erred oftentimes from Thy law ; we have done wickedly ; we have sinned before Thee. But do Thou turn and forgive ; do Thou have pity ; do Thou remit sins ; pardon and absolve us ; make Thy building whole again ; fix fast the loose stones ; strengthen the weak walls ; raise up those that are fallen down. Say not "down with it, down with it even to the ground." Though we have deserved destruction, spare us yet awhile ; though we have deserved to be numbered amongst ruinous heaps, yet have mercy. Cease not to dwell in us ; take not Thy Holy Spirit from us, but stablish us with Thy free Spirit ; make us again a temple to Thine honour, and dwell Thou in the midst of us. Restore us yet again.

Most blessed Jesus, who didst condemn Thy

Temple for the sins of them whose feet trod the courts thereof, visit us not with like condemnation. Let us take warning from the great overthrow of that beautiful house, wherein Thou didst love to dwell, which Thou Thyself didst visit in the flesh, where Thou Thyself wast wont to pray to Thy Father. Move us to repent betimes that we may be spared. Behold, we fall low on our knees before Thy footstool, repenting of our sins and praying Thee to accept our tears. We condemn ourselves in Thy sight that we may not be condemned by Thy mouth. Withdraw not Thy presence from Thy temple, neither come near to condemn it. We confess our wickedness ; we desire amendment of life ; as penitents we humble ourselves at the throne of grace. Let not the sentence go forth out of Thy mouth for our condemnation. Spare us, holy Jesus ; spare us, O Son of David ; spare us, Lord Christ ; spare us, most merciful Saviour. Once more turn Thy face to us again, that as a building fitly framed together, we may grow unto an holy temple in the Lord, an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

WEDNESDAY BEFORE EASTER.

*The Jews take counsel against Jesus—Mary anoints Jesus—
Judas bargains to betray Him.*

THIS day is one of a very remarkable character, not only in itself, but in its position between its yesterday and morrow. For yesterday was the last day of our Lord's ministry of His word, which He had now in the course of three years and a half brought from the mount in Galilee, where He shewed how His Gospel was the spirit of that of which the Law had been the letter, and then finished it upon mount Olivet, where He pronounced the end of that letter in the destruction of the Temple. And to-morrow begins His ministry of reconciliation, opening with its first scene when we behold Him delivered by the treason of Judas into the hands of His enemies, who were seeking His life. Thus this day is as a lull between two violent blasts of a storm. It is so free from all public agitation that our Lord *is seen in the midst of domestic retirement,*

spending the day at Bethany, and not going, as was His wont, to Jerusalem. Thus we behold Him in His character of the Lamb, seemingly unconscious of what was preparing, of the design of bringing Him on the morrow to the slaughter, and we contemplate the quiet outpourings of that gentleness which afterwards made Him to be dumb and open not His mouth, as a sheep before her shearers. At the same time in the background we behold His enemies busily at work. The chief priests and scribes and elders of the people hold a council, in which they deliberate on the means of destroying Him. And the day ends with Judas making his bargain with them to destroy Him. And who were these parties? One was the people of God, under its most strictly legal representation: the other was an Apostle of the Lord. Who could suppose any transaction between these two, other than one of holiness and justice, full of mercy, having life and peace and joy for its object? Who would suspect it to be the darkest deed upon record of unholiness and injustice, and a design to accomplish deeds of vilest treachery and cruelty? Shall we now trust to profession, even of that of our own heart? Is it not arraigned *and condemned* in this transaction, if it shew no

fruit of its profession? Who, that stands at this moment in the Church of God as a disciple of Jesus Christ, can affirm that his heart is clear from the iniquity of these parties, if he can shew no better proof than these parties gave? May it not rather be said that the Christian who makes not good his profession, may at any moment become as one of these? All that is wanting is the hour of trial. What lamentable examples do we see of men ending a profession which was carelessly held, with sins which openly betray or deny their heavenly Lord. Verily not one is safe, but every one is in imminent peril of a like end, who is not looking watchfully to the maintenance of his profession, and bringing forth the fruits of that repentance and faith which are its substance.

How delightful to turn from this den of thieves and murderers, at Jerusalem, to the house of Simon the leper at Bethany. There Jesus is seated at table. And it was the custom of the day and country to anoint the guests on their sitting down : to which David so beautifully alludes in expressing his sense of being under the Lord's protection and roof as it were as a guest in His house, in the 23rd Psalm, "*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine*

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mies : Thou anointest my head with oil ; my
runneth over.” Martha and Mary take their
pective posts. Martha served, as before, at
table ; while Mary, as before, kept to the feet
Jesus, and performed the office of anointing
n. With the foresight of the deep love of an
ned heart she had made costly preparation.
: had bought very precious ointment of the
st costly kind, spikenard, at the price of about
0 in our coin, and of much more according to
value of money at that time, and not content
h that, took care that the very vessel from which
was to pour it upon her Lord should be of
table preciousness, being of alabaster. From
s she poured upon the head of Jesus, and then
ointed His feet, while the sweet odour of the
tment filled the whole house. But she had
ught no napkin with her to dry the feet which
: had anointed. And why ? She had one at
nd much more expressive of her humility and
e. She wiped them with her hair. How
autiful and how simple is this display of
ry’s love. How completely does she express
it the outpouring of her heart. Rich though
: offering was, compared with her means, it
s infinitely richer, as taken from the treasure-
isc of a heart, which was full of the riches of
,

the love of Christ. Was she then to be blamed because she endeavoured to express the consciousness of her inward wealth by the most appropriate token of outward wealth, that she had in her power? So thought one of the company, who looked on with indignation, and cried out against her, "Why this waste? why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" But the Lord took her part, and has left on record words which should never be forgotten, a reply which never required attention more than in these our days, when so much more stress seems to be laid on the name than on the nature of an action. "Why trouble ye the woman? (He said). Let her alone, she hath wrought a good work upon Me. Against the day of My burying hath she kept this, and poured this ointment on Me for My burial. For the poor always ye have with you. But Me ye have not always." Memorable words indeed, to which let us endeavour to apply our hearts and understandings.

Had Mary forgotten the poor? Could she, who had so readily acknowledged the fulfilment of God's word in Jesus, and confessed to Him as the Christ, be forgetful of the words of His father *David*, "*Blessed is he that considereth the*

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poor?" Could she, who shewed a heart so overflowing with kindly affection, have shut it against the claims of the poor? Without doubt she had acknowledged that "the poor always she had with her, by regularly putting apart a portion of her substance for them, and could not but have already contributed to the contents of that bag which Judas bare, and the claims of which he set forth with such seeming interest in the cause of the poor, and with such zeal and base interest in his own behalf. If she had neglected this ordinary duty, never could she have found it in her heart to perform that extraordinary duty which she did to Christ. We may be assured that whenever we have discharged with faithfulness our ordinary duties, we are then so far from having exhausted our means, that we are left with much greater than we had before, and to spend upon much greater occasions. As when our Lord had fed the five thousand, the fragments that remained filled twelve baskets, and must therefore have been more than a hundred-fold of the bread that there was at first, so He bestows a similar virtue on the exertions of those who give to the poor in His name. They are richer than ever for service which more immediately and more visibly concerns His glory. They

have more abundantly a stock whence to contribute, for example, to the maintenance of His truth, honour, and worship among us for ever, through various ways, such as the erection of Churches: and to further the coming of His kingdom abroad, by liberal help to those public exertions which are put forth for maintaining the light of His Gospel amongst our colonists, and shewing it to the heathen. In short, the experience of every one teaches him, that in proportion as he has discharged the lower and more ordinary claims upon his bounty, his heart is lifted up, and with it his means extended also, to go on and contribute to calls of higher and rarer occasion, to proceed from the bag, which is kept by Christ's servants for the general purposes of Christian society, to the box of precious ointment, which is poured on the Lord's own person, in some offering on an occasion in which the love of Christ comes home to the heart, and he can be satisfied with no ordinary means of manifesting it; but the heart is full of joy like that of the wise men (the first-fruits of us Gentile offerers in the Church of God) when they had found Jesus, and opened their treasures and presented unto Him, gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

In one respect indeed we hold in these days a

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different position from Mary, as concerns our care for the poor. They do not come before us independently of Christ, but as actually representing Him. In fact all that we have to do with others is to be considered as done to Him, so continually must we bear Him in mind, having Him dwelling in our hearts by faith, and so diligently therefore must we perform the least of our duties. They are done to Him whom we do not see, through these whom we do see. And what can not be owing from us to Him who joins in Himself the relationship of father, mother, brother, sister, friend, and this in a much closer and higher degree than any which this world can afford? The poor therefore have a peculiar claim upon us, and awful is the account which we have to render of our answer to it, since He Himself will tell us, on the last day, that He presented Himself to us in their persons, put forward His claims in their entreaties; and to such as shall have acknowledged Him in these He will say, "I was a hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me . . . Verily, *I say unto you*: forasmuch as ye have done it

unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

But do the poor want the meat and drink of this world only? Should they not have their full share given them in the promise, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things (that is, the meat, drink, and clothing) shall be added unto you." Verily if the first part of this saying of our Lord were duly done unto them, there would be few left to require at any hands but their own the second. And yet how continually are plans which have this first thing in view, met with the remark of Judas, "Why was not this sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor," that is, in the visible alms of meat, drink, and clothing, or their worth in money? Is a school built with some attention to neatness, which may have its daily and insensible effect upon the minds of the children, is there not too often found at least one person who will reckon for squandered all that might have been spared from the merest necessity of the building, and will calculate the amount, and court popularity by asking, "why it was not given to the poor?" Is there a church built with a proper attention to the decent and solemn requirements of our form of public worship,

which so wholesomely affect the inner man, and impart the proper tone to his feelings on the spot, and thus teach the poor good lessons which sink into the heart surely as insensibly, is there not too often some calculator at hand to cry out, "Why all this waste? why was it not given to the poor?" And do such calculators ever really care for the poor? The experience of the poor will tell them plainly enough.

Do not let us suppose then that Christ is peculiarly present even to us, for the pouring upon Him the tokens of our love and duty, in the feeding and clothing of the poor. There lies the ordinary duty of every day. And it is in the path of such ordinary duties, and nowhere else, that our blessed Lord sets before us the extraordinary occasions on which He graciously vouchsafes to accept service from us, as He did from Mary. It is therefore in the faithful discharge of the requirements of our Christian calling, and of that station in which we have received our calling, that we are to look out for the blessed privilege of Mary. "Let every man (says St. Paul) abide in the calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant, care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. *For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant,*

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is the Lord's freeman. Likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price: be ye not the servants of men." The grand thing to be considered then by the true member of God's Church is, that the Lord hath set him where he is, and that therefore it is good for him to be there: not but that if he be found humbly faithful there, he shall receive the blessed invitation, "Friend, go up higher;" and this will probably come in the way of some service as peculiar in its fashion as Mary's. What excellent service has not been done before now in the presence of the whole Church of God by men who seemed the meanest instruments, but had the patience of faith to wait the Lord's time of employing them, and were prepared for it by exact and watchful attention in their lower sphere. Mary did not go out of her way to do the service which won for her so great a blessing. We have seen how it lay, through the Lord's graciousness and her attention to the duties of her household, exactly in the way. No more therefore must we go out of our way: but be content to do our utmost where we are, and be thoroughly assured that the Lord knows, much better than we do ourselves, what we are fit for, *and will always find for us enough*

to do, if we have but the diligence and circumspection to see it and attend to it. The poorest of us can always preach in the Church of God by the most effectual sermon of a good example. The lowest amongst us can always rule in the Church by the most absolute sovereignty of all, godly authority over a godly household. In the sacrifice of his body, living and holy, to God, through doing the will which his devoted spirit hath sought and found, and in the authority which he maintains over the affections of his own heart, and in the influence which his example procures for him in his proper place, he can publicly prove himself one of a royal priesthood. And the more he exerts himself within the proper bounds of his station, so much the wider he will find it for usefulness, and the fuller with calls upon him for unremitting diligence.

Here is the road to Mary's blessing. On this will be found that peculiar act of service to which the Lord shall set the seal of his approbation, and return the express testimony of love. What that act may be it is useless beforehand to suppose, so very many are the ways in which the Lord may be served by different persons with different means in different stations. But we *can* tell with certainty the tokens of the act.

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The first will be a deep sense in the heart of Christ's presence, a settled conviction that the act is one which He will approve and accept from His servant as an expression of his devotion and love. And in the next place that love will be entirely riveted upon Him, so as to cast out of sight all other objects for the time, be they even the poor, (though they will come in the end for their share in this as in every other Christian act, as we have seen already,) and to distinguish Him from all around. And thirdly, this love will think nothing which it can afford too dear for an offering. It will scruple no sacrifice, it will stop short of no self-denial. And fourthly, it will not consider how the act may appear in the eyes of the world, and in the judgment of those who make their notions of direct usefulness the measure of the value of a man's deeds: it will consider only how best it may express its sense of God's favour and testify its utter devotedness. And fifthly, it will delight in putting itself in the most humble posture, it will express its thanks by the most lively tokens of its sense of unworthiness, and the richer the offering which it brings, so much the more deeply will be felt the unworthiness of the privilege of bringing it. Thus will be acted over *again the precious offering* of Mary's spikenard,

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and the humble service of wiping His feet with her hair. But sixthly, there will also come an evidence not from within only, but also from without, not from the heart only, but also from the world. The Judases will open their mouths, and cry out shame upon the act as one of waste. "What! to spend so much on this object, when so many poor families might have been made comfortable with the money," cry out these men, who think how much their own pockets might have been spared in their forced contributions to the poor, if this money had gone directly that way. Yes! They would have it all in their own bag. They would rob the Lord of the perfume of all that is beautiful, of all that is lovely, of all which adorns, of all that lends grace, honour, and dignity to His service, and have it spent on that which, under the pretence of providing for the poor, benefits in fact only themselves.

Thus we have seen what a blessing Mary enjoyed in our Lord's simply allowing of her offering. But this is very far indeed from being all that she received from Him. He here made good His own promise, "to him that hath, more shall be given," and accepted this anointing to a purpose of which Mary had no conception, as an *earnest* of a duty of love and relationship to

the performance of which she would not have presumed. "Against the day of My burying hath she kept this," He said to those who rebuked the act. Here then was a higher privilege still waiting upon the former. Of all those who are admitted to the table of a great man, how few are they who are called to attend at his burial. Then is made the distinction between general and familiar acquaintances, between friends and relations. Here therefore her Lord admitted Mary to an intimacy from the notion of which her humility would have shrunk. He accepted from her in the spikenard, which prepared Him for the feast, the spices and ointments which were to prepare His body for the grave, according to the custom of the Jews. In her humble service to His living body, which commanded her reverence, He recognised her service of love and charity to His dead and helpless body, which could command but her affectionate pity. Here was a return of love indeed, here was a mark of confidence indeed. Jesus thanked her doubly, even for two acts in one. In the lesser which was done with such thankful love, He accepted also the greater as a fitter and higher expression than she could imagine of such love. He not only took her *offering*, but *He crowned it*.

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What an additional encouragement is this for all those that truly love the Lord, and endeavour to shew forth that love not only with some word of life, but with some deed of life. "They know not what they do," in a very opposite sense indeed to that in which our Lord applied those words to His crucifiers. Their deed is but a type of that which the Lord puts down to their account. Unprofitable servants indeed they are, as they most readily profess themselves to be. But the Lord is pleased to reckon for profit the earnest and humble endeavours of the will. And these He furthers to a purpose higher still and more heavenly, than any which the heart is conceiving. Is not history full of examples, even should our daily experience be wanting, which shew how good and faithful servants of the Lord, in aiming at some excellent service, have achieved one, much more excellent still, which lay far beyond the bounds of their foresight at the time, and which they are the very first to ascribe to the hand of the Lord being with them, and to that only? And alas! may we not at the same time observe how, when men set themselves down to a work of sin, they rise up from one of such profligacy and impiety, *as had never entered even into their wicked ima-*

ginations : for the hand of Satan has gone along with them, and set upon their misdeed its appropriate crown.

Of this latter melancholy contrast to Mary's service, we have an apposite example in Judas. He had committed a breach of trust in the keeping of that bag, and had abused the confidence of the Lord, and of His disciples, and betrayed the cause of those poor which he pretended to plead. So already had he entered upon a sin the course of which ended in betraying his Lord. And the hypocrisy of his plea for the poor marks the dreadful moment when Satan had got him into his power as the instrument of his devices against the Son of Man. He quitted the room with the design of betraying Him, and on the same night made his bargain. And while Mary thought it not too much to spend more than ten pounds of our money in the simple compliment of anointing her Lord, Judas, in his infamous avarice, held Him so cheap as to sell Him for about four pounds. Such are the two characters exhibited before us with their appropriate deeds on this day. And if we derive the most cheering encouragement from the study of the one, with what fear and trembling for ourselves, with what *resolutions of watchfulness and circumspec-*

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tion, with what an abhorrence of fine pretences, with what a warning of the precipitate course of sin, when once dressed up to the conscience by the arts of Satan, should we regard the other. So strong is each that the scent of it has reached to us through generation after generation unto this day, and the house of this world is filled with the odour, wheresoever the Gospel of Christ is preached. That which Mary hath done is told for a memorial of her, sweet as it is with all the fragrance of holiness. And that which Judas hath done, is told also for a very different memorial of him, stirring up our abhorrence with the fumes of hell.

Quiet therefore as this day may seem in its outward appearances, we see that few days were more busy in inward operations. The Holy Spirit and the evil spirit were exerting their several influences, even in the same room and same company. Shall it not then be a day of meditation and prayer, and of putting to account all such means as lie within our reach, by the grace of that blessed Spirit, through whom alone we can be enabled to fulfil one deed of our service to our heavenly Master?

DEVOTION.

AT Thy feet, most blessed Jesus, who art now in heaven interceding for us with the Father, we bow ourselves ; at Thy feet we lay even ourselves, and offer unto Thee the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart. We would anoint Thy feet with our tears, not daring to lift up so much as our eyes unto heaven, but sitting in the dust, like that great Penitent, whom Thou didst mercifully receive and who is to us an example of true repentance.

O Lord, let our prayers be unto Thee as sweet perfume ascending up unto Thee in Thy heavenly house, and acceptable unto Thee out of Thy great mercy. Deign to look down upon us from above and bend Thine ear to hear, though our prayers be but weak and faint and wholly unequal to the greatness of our sins. With a great burden of sins, very heavy, too heavy to bear, do we fall down. We pray Thee to lighten us of this load ; like Mary Magdalene we have sinned much ; we are quite weighed down ; we have nothing to plead ; we cannot excuse ourselves, neither can we justify ourselves. All we can say is, that we have sinned and that Thou art merciful ; *we have no costly offering, nothing but our*

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tears. But Thou art He who didst receive sinners, therefore do we come unto Thee. Thou art He who canst relieve sinners when they come. Thou art He who didst bear our burden and weep for us and carry our sorrows. When Thine own people didst counsel against Thee, Thou hadst taken counsel to suffer for the sins of the world, and didst receive a penitent sinner with wonderful love.

Receive us then, good Lord, who as penitents haste unto Thee for help. Receive us as Thou didst receive Mary in the fulness of Thy love, and with great mercifulness forgive. Receive us who desire to return to the Bishop and Shepherd of our souls and greatly bewail our wanderings from Thy way. Receive us into Thy bosom, though we deserve to be cast out of Thy love and to perish. Receive us though we be unworthy to be received and have oftentimes refused to receive Thee when Thou didst desire to come into our house and to make Thine abode with us. Most merciful Jesus, receive us yet again; for Thou only art our Saviour, and there is none other to whom we can go, none other beside Thee who hast the words of eternal life. Amen.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

THURSDAY BEFORE EASTER.

Jesus institutes the Sacrament of the Last Supper—suffers agony in the garden—is betrayed by Judas—is denied by Peter—is condemned by the High-priest and Council.

THROUGHOUT this day, until eventide, nothing happened that needed to be recorded. Our Lord was still in His retirement at Bethany. And good reason there seems to have been for His stillness and repose, when we consider what His nature was going to endure towards the end of the day. He then revisits Jerusalem, never again to return from it on this side of the grave. And all at once in following Him in our thoughts we are in the throng of the awful events, which come one upon another, like claps of thunder, and disclose to us the frightful wickedness of men and the enduring mercy of the Redeemer.

The first event is one which He, at the very time of its occurrence, especially ordered to be remembered to the end of the world by the members of His Church. It was the supper, in which He *appeared for the last time* before His death

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among His disciples, and took His leave of them, and instituting the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." And it has been done in remembrance of Him unto the present day, wheresoever His Gospel has been preached. But has this been done so often and by so many as it should have been done? Must it not be confessed that amongst us at least, but a small proportion, often not a tenth part, of those who have solemnly ratified their baptismal vows at confirmation, concern themselves in that remembrance. What do you say to this? Surely, you will not say that you do as most others do, and rest content with that. Will the consent of any number of people turn wrong into right? Only consider what was the general consent of the people of God in those days in Jerusalem. Was not "Crucify Him, crucify Him," their general cry? Do you think that Christ will judge His people in this day, and accept anything from them as right because it has been done by the most part? Then the man of this world will have no reason to fear; he is as safe as the general consent of the world can make him. Childish, and utterly contrary to common sense as such an argument is, yet it lies at the *bottom* of the heart of every careless Christian.

He has not forsaken the way of the world, and made Christ the way for himself, and therefore conforming to it he must needs defend and uphold its fashion.

But you carefully keep the Lord's day. And now what are the words of the commandment which orders that to be kept? Are they not, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day?" Are they then more positive than these, "Do this in remembrance of Me?" Is this then your liberty in Christ, to obey that commandment which came in threats amid fire and tempest; and to disobey that which came with every token of gentleness and love? Can you have that love which "casteth out fear?" Are you not most truly slavish in heart, and requiring the scourge to set you to work, and not the kind voice of the Master, who calls you friend, if you keep only that which comes in the shape of stern commandment, but neglect that which comes under the form of a loving request? Had our Lord said, "Do this, and remember the dreadful judgment with which I will visit the neglect of it," do you think that it would meet with the neglect which now befalls it? Would you yourself dare to neglect it? But because He says, "*Do this, and remember Me, who so love*

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My sheep, that I am laying down My life for them," you think yourself quite free to do or not do ; you presume upon His goodness, and trouble not yourself about the words. Is not this the same slavish spirit which at that time possessed the populace of Jerusalem ? And are you in no danger of crucifying Him afresh, to whom you refuse to render your testimony of love, rejecting the dying words of Him who died to save you ?

Terrible are the examples before you this night. Will you not be warned, whoever turn away from the table on which the remembrance of Him is made. There were then at that table two who would not take our Lord's warning. There was Peter, too confident in his courage to understand the meaning of it, and Judas, too desperately engaged in his treason to accept it. And on this very night they both fell : one for a time, the other for ever. And remember that they had both followed the Lord and attended to His word in public and in private up to that moment. They had both shared with Him perils in the wilderness and perils on the deep. What have you yourself done ? Can you call to mind one day or one transaction in which you have distinctly and purposely put yourself in Christ's *company*, wrought purely for His sake, and with

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the thought of His eye, as of a loving Lord, upon you? Then you may have come to the point of peril in which these two disciples were. But if you have so little thought of being under His eye that you have not even given attention to the ready and easy means of remembering Him, and communicating with Him, which He has Himself established, how infinitely beyond that point must your peril be. Can you claim to be a disciple at all? Can the disciple who will not think of his master be really a disciple; or a servant who will not think of his Lord be really a servant? Do you think that there is only one way of denying Christ, namely, that in which Peter denied Him; and only one way of betraying Christ, namely, that in which Judas betrayed Him? Alas there are hundreds and thousands of ways, as there are hundreds and thousands of kinds of that shame which led Peter to deny his Lord while He was standing as a criminal at the bar of the high-priest; and hundreds and thousands of that base spirit of worldly gain which led Judas to betray Him. How many are daily ashamed of the cross of Christ, being afraid of the ridicule of the world and mockery of companions, if they pursue that *line of duty which their conscience, informed by*

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the word of the Lord and the grace of His Spirit, lays before them. How many daily betray Christ by surrendering what they cannot but know to be His cause to their love of the gain of this world. What madness to conceive, as seems so generally supposed, that the falls of these two disciples are too great for the generality of Christians to commit, that the trials under which they fell are such as scarcely can happen again. The world is the same as ever. It contains therefore for the Christian the same trials, and these trials threaten the same falls. Could the life of every man in a parish be opened to us, as have been those of Peter and Judas, do you think that there would appear no signs of denial or betrayal? It is the business of the Christian's experience to come to the knowledge of all those secret thoughts and feelings which lead to such lamentable results ; and of his watchfulness and circumspection to see that his own heart be free of them ; and of his wisdom to be assured that men have too often little care about the thing, as long as they can keep the name, and so put out of all account a falling away from Christ. For that may really happen, and yet be far from forfeiting for them in this world the title of *Christian*.

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See therefore in what a continual state of peril that person is living who declines to attend the feast which is spread for the performance of the commandment, "Do this in remembrance of Me." But we have not yet come to the full extent of that peril. Let us follow Peter from that upper room in which he received his warning at the mouth of the Lord, as he had the bread and wine at His hands. Let us accompany him into the garden of Gethsemane to witness a spectacle which it was a singular privilege to behold, inasmuch as he shared it with only two others of the Apostles, James and John, who having been witnesses together with him of the height of the glory of the Son of Man in His transfiguration, were now to be joint spectators of the scene of His lowest humiliation in His agony and bloody sweat. There was the preparation for the final suffering of the cross. There Peter, we say to ourselves, might have guessed that for which he was to make up his mind. There he should have been disabused of such false notions of the worldly nature of Christ's kingdom, which might have been further confirmed in his heart by the late triumphant entry into Jerusalem. There his Lord's warning might have *come into his mind*. Now see the scene

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which is there displayed before our eyes, and consider whether, if we would only take it to heart, we could, any one of us, proceed in that course of carelessness which leads away from the commandment, "Do this in remembrance of Me;" still more whether any one who, as some do, evade the commandment under the profession of serious scruples, can justify themselves in the neglect.

The Son of Man had no sin in Him, any more than Adam had before the devil had seduced him, or the angels before they fell. But could He have saved us, if He had possessed no higher quality than this? This would have left Him with the power of sinning. How then could He have satisfied God for our sins, if it was possible for Him at some time or other to sin? When security is given for a debt, does not the creditor with good reason, and in strict justice too, accept none but from a person who is unlikely himself to fall into debt? And if the world was eternal, and things unchangeable, would he not insist on having it from none but such as could not by any possibility ever come into debt? Surely common justice would demand thus much for his satisfaction. Who then shall satisfy *Almighty God*, who filleth eternity, for sin, which

our Lord Himself represents under the figure of a debt, except one who is of a condition beyond all possibility of ever sinning? But such a condition belongs to no creature, but to God only. Therefore it was that the Word, which was God, became flesh, and Jesus the Son of Man was also Christ the Son of the living God. Thus He was able to make the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, though red as scarlet, and reaching from the first man who had life upon earth to the last man who should be left living there at His coming.

But what a dreadful thing is sin. Sinners though we are, we find in our consciences its condemnation, and in proportion to our growth in holiness we grow in hatred and abhorrence of sin, and in the pain and loathing with which we are filled, on having any thing to do with it, be it but hearing its sounds and witnessing its sights. How loathsome, then, how painful must have been the task which our Lord in His perfect holiness took upon Him, when He entered upon the offering of the sacrifice for sin. O how inexpressible must have been the anguish of His spotless soul as soon as He had any thing to do with its defilement; with what an intolerable weight *must it have pressed down upon Him,*

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when He took up and bore the burden of the sins of the whole world.

In the garden of Gethsemane began these sufferings for sin. There in extreme agony of soul He took up that burden which He was to carry away with Him out of the world for His people, in the agony of the body unto death. Therefore it was that He said to His disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Therefore it was that He prayed thrice to the Father, after the form, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Therefore such was His agony, that His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground. Therefore such was His fainting of strength that an angel appeared unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him. O how difficult is it for our poor simple nature to come to any thing like a proper imagination of the dreadfulness of this scene. And yet how little can we really understand of the horror of the next scene, that of the cross, without it. The nails, the blood, the thirst, make a deeper impression upon us, because our flesh can understand them. But that which lay under those tortures, and gave them a *sting of agony* which no heart of man can conceive,

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be discerned only by the spirit which has already been in company with Him in the garden. And now what was man doing all this while, in this dreadful business was on foot, and all on his account. We blame most severely those children who, while their parents are working themselves to death for their maintenance, amuse themselves without any feeling for them, or care to help them, though able enough. But what is this unthankful insensibility to that which was done by man at this moment, when God the only Father was giving His only-begotten Son for him. We will not think of the heathen. What were the boastful people of God doing? They had secured one of His twelve to betray Him, and, with him for their guide, were on their way to the garden to seize Him, that they might bind Him and put Him to death. And what were His very own Apostles, yea the three who were cast out from His Apostles, doing? They

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upwards of three years daily Him who spake as never man spake, who honoured and loved Him with all their hearts, even they were found wanting in this hour, and needed their Lord's merciful excuse, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Ought we not indeed to be humbled under these considerations, and should we not find here a fit touchstone for the examination of our hearts? Are we duly sensible of that which has been undergone by the Captain of our salvation in His warfare against our deadly enemies? Can we avail ourselves of that excuse which He made for His disciples then? Surely no more than those disciples availed themselves of it, after Jesus had accomplished His work, and having suffered, and died, and risen, and ascended into glory, sent down His Holy Spirit of promise, and enlightened their hearts to the meaning of those stupendous things which their eyes had seen, their ears had heard, but their hearts had not understood. Yes, we are inexcusable if we can allow ourselves to sleep in carelessness concerning that which the Son has done for us, and in forgetfulness of God who sent Him. Christ hath been declared to us the Son of God with power, and has left us no *middle way*. We cannot plead ignorance. At

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How few in a Christian country, (and shame
guilt it is somewhere that there should be
a few in a Christian country,) can be so
ignorant of the word of God as to need excuse.

How can we not plead want of spiritual help, when we
have been furnished so abundantly with it in His
Church. We must be infidels, or we must peni-
tently confess our indisposition to learn and un-
derstand His word, we must confess our insensi-
bility to the operation of His Holy Spirit, and we
must amend all this, if we would not advance
to irrecoverable error, and be lost in the pit of
deceit. How can a man have his heart in the
seeking out of his salvation, how shall it be pos-
sessed with the proper fear and trembling, if it
shall never have been applied to the consideration
of the nature of sin, and feared and trembled
under the dreadful condemnation pronounced
on it in the agony and bloody sweat of the
Saviour which taketh away the sins of the world?
When this tremendous scene is called to mind in
the words of our Litany, does the heart acknow-
ledge the condition in which it is thus placed?

If it do, how deeply does it feel the meaning
of those words which the lips are called upon to
utter, how anxiously awake does it keep itself,
as it may "*tarry and watch with the Lord,*"

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and enter into all the fulness of communication with the Lord in this His humiliation, that being humbled together with Him, it may also be exalted.

And now to cast a look back again on the first event of the day, since we can understand and feel its bearing much better from observing that to which it has led the way: what a proof of utter want of all understanding and feeling on this awful subject is the neglect of the commandment, "do this in remembrance of Me;" and of the blessed assurance, "This is My body," "this is My blood." Can a person, shrewd enough in all worldly matters, all at once lose all common sense and proper feeling, when he comes to this unworldly matter? Yet hear how lightly some can argue. It is taken by improper persons, say they. Yes verily it was taken, at the very time of its institution, and with the knowledge of the Lord Himself, by the most improper person of all, Judas. Yet His Apostles kept it, and delivered it to the whole Church to keep to the end of the world, and shew the Lord's death till He come. If a thing be abused by the unworthy, must it therefore not be used by the worthy? If to the former it be among the articles of their *condemnation*, must it lose the virtue of its in-

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stitution to the latter, and cease to be among the elements of their salvation? Do such objectors follow out their argument, as in common honesty they should, and abstain from all meat and drink, because the Lord's appointment of them to our bodily sustenance has been abused to gluttony and drunkenness? And it were well if to the folly of such arguments there were never added a pharisaical notion of their own strictness, who will not touch a thing so dishonoured, and an uncharitable opinion of others, whom, it seems, they have such abundant leisure to judge amid such pressing and overwhelming occupation of thought as the consideration of the agony and sacrifice of the Lord must bring. O how sad it is that so many should be found who can justify themselves in the neglect of so plain and positive a duty with excuses so flimsy and off-hand. Do they not, as far as in them lies, bring the Lord's institution into contempt quite as much as the vilest abuser of it.

The man who will not keep the Lord's day is set down by all, who profess any strictness at all, as a decidedly irreligious character. A Sabbath-breaker, all agree, cannot be a true Christian. Why then should there be any other *opinion concerning the man who will not take*

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the Lord's Supper? We have seen that it has been instituted upon reasons which come much nearer home as to our affections and understanding. Must there not be something grossly wrong in the common opinion if it can allow of such glaring inconsistency as this, and not only allow it, but uphold it? Away then with it, hearken not to it, but seriously consider the account which has been laid before you of the events of this day. Open your heart to them, and let them speak to you at once with all their fulness of meaning. Then you will not be double-minded on this or any other matter of the world to come. Remember that the more plain and positive any duty is, so much the more deceitful and dangerous are the arguments by which men excuse themselves from it. Do you suppose that Judas had not persuaded himself with argument which should defend his betrayal of his Lord? If you do, you must have thought very little on the dreadful warning of his example, and come to a very slight acquaintance with your heart. Examine then yourself closely and in all sincerity upon what has been set before you for this day's consideration. Place your Lord before you, and thus hearken to Him, as He says, "Do this in remembrance of Me." Yes! let these

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words find the bottom of your heart, and pray for the Holy Spirit to inspire it with such a course of meditation that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith. And place also Peter in his denial, and Judas in his treason before you. Ascertain in comparison the state of your own heart, how it would lead you to act under the like circumstances at this very moment. If you do not fear and tremble, and watch and pray that you enter not into temptation, you must either have risen above man's condition here towards the angels which stand, and that is impossible : or you must have fallen below his proper condition towards the angels which have fallen, and that alas is possible.

DEVOTION.

O LORD Jesus, we behold Thee this day in Thy holy Word, not as Thou art now in the heaven of heavens in Thine own great glory and served by all heavenly powers, but alone, *stretched along the ground in the darkness of*

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the night, bedewed with a bloody sweat issuing from Thy flesh. We behold Thee withdrawn from Thy disciples, who though they were near unto Thee yet did not see Thee, for their eyes were heavy with sleep by reason of their sorrow, when Thy sorrow suffered Thee not to sleep. But Thy Spirit hath shewed us the scene of that night, and hath taken us into the garden that we might see Thee in Thine agony.

We hear Thee crying to Thy Father with that exceeding bitter cry which no ear of man heard in the watches of that night; Thy Spirit hath delivered unto us these Thy words.

And what shall we say, Lord, when we see Thee in Thy mysterious grief, crying out in the bitterness of Thy soul, praying that the cup of most bitter death and pains of death might, if it were possible, pass from Thee, covered with the shadow of death, the fear of death falling on Thee and an horrible dread overwhelming Thee! Thou art the everlasting Son! Thou art the King of glory! Thou madest heaven and earth! Thou rulest all things, and art very high exalted, and have all creatures under Thee! yet Thou didst weep in that garden, and cast Thyself on the earth, and wast exceeding sorrowful even unto death. O sorrow most mysterious! O most

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mysterious love ! O wonderful humility of Thine at that day ! O wonderful glory at this time and for ever ! As we think of these things we may well hold our tongue and speak nothing, and refrain our lips even from good words. Lord, we believe ; help Thou our unbelief.

'This we know, that out of Thy love came Thy sorrow, and that for our sakes Thou didst bear all that unspeakable grief. Shall we not therefore be sorrowful, O Lord, when we consider Thy sorrow ? Shall we not be covered with shame when we consider Thy shame ? For we did pour our share of bitterness into that bitter cup ; we did contribute our portion of sin to that vast weight of sin which Thou didst then put upon Thy neck ; we did cast our transgressions into that treasury of woes that filled Thee with woes. In Thy bitter crying and tears, in Thy bloody sweat, in Thy extreme anguish of soul we see ourselves convicted of sins black and numberless, of sins as the sand of the sea-shore in multitude, and as a thick cloud in blackness. Our guilt stands before us when we see Thee thus troubled, thus humbled, thus sorrowing. Guilty are we, blessed Jesus, concerning Thee our brother ; as guilty brethren we come before Thee to bless *Thee for that brother's* part which 'Thou didst

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undertake for us out of the fulness of Thy love.

O holy Jesus, when we are lovers of pleasure turn Thou our eyes towards that scene of heaviness ; when we are proud, teach us to at Thy humility, who didst bend Thyself to the earth ; when we are in our affliction, : us to consider Thy sorrows ; when we are lonely and desolate, shew us Thy loneliness ; when we are greedy of honour, draw us into the : of Thy dishonour ; when we are selfish, r Thyself unto us not doing Thine own will Thy Father's, and suffering an agony for joy. In all things, O Lord, shew us Th: that in Thy light we may see light, and Thy love learn love, and from all the par Thy example study in all acts and states o to follow Thy blessed steps.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

GOOD FRIDAY.

Christ crucified.

Good indeed was this day for us, and the better we think it for our salvation the worse will appear to us the sufferings which it brought to Him who saved us. We have indeed already entered upon some estimation of those sufferings, as we saw them commence in His agony of spirit and bloody sweat in the garden. But to-day they are exhibited in a body, suffering openly the most shocking death of crucifixion. To that Cross our eyes must be directed; there we must behold the Sacrifice once offered for the sins of the whole world, and confess in it our own vileness, and unthankful rebelliousness, and the unsearchable riches of the love of the Father who could give His Son, and of the Son who could give Himself, for the world, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but *have everlasting life*. Is it not a day in-

deed of constraint upon all worldly appetite, a day of humiliation of every affection which exalts itself upon the hopes and joys of this life. The Bridegroom has been taken away, shall not the children of the bridechamber fast and mourn? (Matt. ix. 15.) Can any one have at all in mind the tremendous event which distinguishes this day, and spend it like other days? Alas that so many should spend it not as other days, not in keeping the fast, but in making it a day of feast and pleasure. What notion can they have of Him who on this day fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, (liii. 3,) "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." And who can understand his own heart, and know to his thorough conviction his place as a fallen being, who has forsaken his first estate of blessedness and first habitation in the place assigned him by God, if he do not bring home to his heart the treatment which the Saviour of the world experienced from the world on this day, when all the stores of the treachery, of the malice, the pride, the hypocrisy, the cruelty of our nature were emptied out *against Him*? Do Judas, and Caiaphas, and

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Pilate, and Herod, with all the assembled people crying, "Crucify Him," stand alone? However your heart may abhor the characters and deeds of these men, yet it is from its very feeling that it is the same human heart with theirs, and from its experience of its deceitfulness, and from its continual struggle for maintaining the sovereignty over its rebelliousness, that it is enabled to understand them, and to condemn them. And more especially as to the people of God at that day, who, when the Word came unto His own, received Him not, it can estimate the brightness of the light which our heart can quench, the open conviction which it can shut out. And all this too under pretence of zeal for God. What then will it not do without any such pretence at all? And in what a state of extreme peril must that man be living who is not in the habit of watchfully bringing this inward dweller and ruler of his senses and affections to a strict account.

But of all things nothing is so hateful to unspiritual man as that the thoughts of his heart should be revealed. But this revelation was from the very first the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What wonder then that against the *holy child of God*, Jesus, whom He had

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anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, (Acts iv. 27.) Yes! even they, who were set at deepest enmity against each other, could all for a season forego it, to make common cause against one whom, from their common wickedness, they reckoned for their common enemy. On this day Pilate and Herod, who had been hitherto at enmity, were made friends over the sufferings of Jesus. On this day Pilate and the high-priest, who were always quarrelling upon points which the Jews deemed religious, made up their differences, and agreed in crucifying the Lord of glory. On this day, the world, represented most fully by its Jewish and Gentile heads, Caiaphas and Pilate, and making a mocking proclamation of the sufferings and death of the Christ of God, through its languages of government, literature, and revealed religion, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, publicly despised and rejected Him. And, as if this was not enough, His own disciples had done with Him. Judas had betrayed Him, Peter had denied Him, the rest had forsaken Him and fled. Not even one familiar friend stood by Him at His trial, and thus *represented*, we did indeed hide our faces from Him.

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And what, I ask, are we doing but hiding them still, if in our daily conversation we consent to this world: if we crucify not its affections and lusts, are we not manifestly indulging those agents which crucified the Son of God? And if we indulge them, are we not led by them, and if led by them, are we not ready to do the same over again which they have already done against Christ. Is there any thing wanting but the occasion to provoke us? Here is a terrible thought for us. Whom are we really following? Can our conscience bear witness to us that we are following Christ, and not the world? Or do we feel in the bottom of our hearts an indifference to the cause of the Captain of our salvation, does a secret mockery of unbelief extinguish the motions of conscience, does an unwillingness to forego worldly enjoyment make the demands of holiness to be distasteful, and the lessons of God's word to be disregarded, the example of His followers to be an object of contempt, and is not an angry or specious defence set up against conscience, whenever, as sometimes it will, it bestirs itself, as a person half asleep does, from one side to the other? Here is a state of mind which every one will allow to be *but too common*, whenever he looks out upon

his neighbours. But few will look in themselves. In their neighbours they see outbreak of sin. In themselves they see cloak of excuses.

Full as our hands are in this world, in to take something up we must put some down. And if we take something up which is quite contrary to all that we have in hand, we must put all down. The affections of a new man are contrary to those of the old. The sinful habits of the children of this world are opposite to the holy conversation of the children of God : the death of sin is contrary to the life of righteousness : the self-denial of the cross is contrary to the indulgence of the flesh. Christ to the indulgence of appetites : the warfare against the flesh. Where now is the evidence of your having put down the one and taken up the other? Where is the contrite heart, humbled spirit, act of self-denial, desire of love, work of duty, expression of thanksgiving not only with lips but with life? Are you ready to put your hand in ownership to any one of these? Can you, as standing in the presence of Almighty God, point out a plan of life or conduct under His law in the obedience of faith, in amendment of repentance? It may have been *purposed* often, and with hearty resolution

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time. A beginning may have been made, and then all has shortly come to a stop. You might have found the cost too dear for you to proceed; it began to call for sacrifices on which you had not calculated. Things of the outer world were to be thrown aside which you loved, and in which you were loth to see any harm; certain company, for example, was to be given up, certain places to be avoided. And things of the inner man were to be taken in hand, which proved themselves not to the flesh but to the spirit, and had the praise not of man, but of God. You might have stopped in the building of your tower. Is it so? Then put yourself amidst the crowd in the streets of Jerusalem, and consider to what your present frame of mind would have led. Does an irresolute double-minded man ever resist a general cry? Does he not always bow in it the little independence of conscience that he retains? What then would you have done, when the whole multitude of the Jews with the high-priest and chief priests at their head cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." Here we have come to a test indeed. In proportion to the inconsistency with which the Christian character is maintained by a man, is the heartiness with which he would have uttered

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that cry. And here, on this especial day, lies one ground of the deep humiliation of the child of God. Every failure from holy purpose, every coming short of known duty brings that cry to his ears with the painful misgiving that he might have been persuaded or compelled to utter it: and he prays with tears of contrition to be strengthened with all might, that he may follow his Saviour, even unto the cross. O if the watchful can thus tremble, what indeed must be the position of the careless!

Let us then place ourselves for a few minutes of thought in the streets of Jerusalem. All the city is moved. A multitude that cannot be numbered is assembled there from all nations under heaven to celebrate the Passover, and it is now met to witness a piteous spectacle, to attend a melancholy procession. But can any thing be more piteous, more melancholy than its own inconsistency? Here are they who a few days ago all patiently heard, and many heartily re-echoed the triumphant song, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." And now they are attending Him to His cross, approvers of His sentence. Three long hours were spent on the road from Pilate's judgment-seat to Calvary, during which the Christ

endured all the painful tokens of being rejected and despised of men, and proved Himself "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Bleeding from His stripes and crown of thorns, faint from His previous agony, tottering under the weakness produced by that which He had been publicly undergoing for so many hours, staggering under the burden of His cross, from which His executioners, for the very accomplishment of His sentence, found it necessary to relieve Him, and bruised from the pressure of the throng, and buffetings of cruel men, after such dreadful preparation He was lifted up upon the cross. And now when He began to writhe under this new torment, and the blood streamed from the nails which fastened Him to the cross, what are the first words which come forth from His lips? O miracle of divine goodness! no ill-treatment by man could alter the gracious purpose for which He came into the world. They are the substance of what He had all along announced from His first proclamation that men should "repent and believe the gospel," (Mark i. 15,) they are the suitable appendage to that announcement which He had made individually to so many, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." He utters a prayer saying, "Father, forgive *them*, for *they* know not what they do."

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In order to estimate in any degree the value of such words, let us bear in mind who they were, for whom the intercession was immediately made. They were the elect people of God, for whom He had wrought such marvellous mercies in bringing them to and settling them in that land in which they were now crucifying His only-begotten Son : He had even granted them a return to it after they had forfeited it by their sins. They who ought to have been the very first to receive Him, having been especially instructed for that purpose, were now putting the crown to that work of bitter persecution with which they had pursued Him throughout His ministry, and in the persons of the very heads of their nation, and leaders of their minds, were finishing the most cruel injury which they had done Him by the most savage insult. "He saved others ; let Him save Himself if He be the Christ, the chosen of God," (Luke xxiii. 35,) cried the people and their rulers with them in derision. He had come unto His own in fulfilment of those promises with which He had enlightened them, and His own received Him not. "Their heart had waxed gross, and their ears had become dull of hearing, and their eyes they had closed ; lest at any time they should see with their

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eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and He should heal them." Having given themselves up to the false hopes of this world, they hated heavenly truth. Gross therefore was their ignorance, as it was wilful. Yet the merciful Saviour delayed as yet to impute it as their sin, and even here pleaded it as the excuse of their ill treatment of Him. And therefore His Apostle St. Peter also says, "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." (Acts iii. 17.) Was there ever such an example of love? Is not the love of Christ indeed a love which passeth knowledge, as St. Paul tells the Ephesians? (iii. 19.) Men may forgive injuries after some time, when the fret and smart are over: but here is Christ, at the very pitch of the agony of body and soul which afflicted Him, amid the sharp sufferings of the most unjust and abominable cruelty ever inflicted upon man, amid the railings and blasphemy of those who should have received Him with shouts of acclamation and knees of adoration, here is He praying for their forgiveness!

But can ignorance be pleaded at all times? Certainly not. St. Paul, himself an example of the fulfilment of that forgiveness upon ignorance

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for which his Lord prayed, said to the Athenians, as he reproved their idolatry, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts xvii. 30.) And we must never lose sight of the fact, that the time of this general winking at the ignorance which refused the message of the Gospel continued but for a few weeks after the prayer of the Saviour had been uttered. Ten days after His ascension into heaven He sent down the Holy Ghost. And they who resisted to the end the preachers of Christ crucified resisted the Holy Ghost, who spake in them. As the doctrine came more frequently before men, and in spite of its further calls upon them they still shut their ears in unbelief, then they ended in the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. (Matt. xii. 31, 32.)

And now have we not need indeed to look about us? We are not living in the days of the ministry of Jesus upon earth, when whosoever spoke a word against the Son of Man it might be forgiven him. We are living in the days of the ministry of the Spirit, who hath taught us all things. Then all was incomplete, and therefore men had not of course received the full means of *salvation*, the perfect satisfaction of faith, the full

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enlightenment of conscience. But now all is complete. Christ has been glorified. The Holy Ghost has set his seal to the work. And we especially are enjoying, in this our favoured country, all the illumination of His Church. No excuse therefore is left for the stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, who resist the Holy Ghost. (Acts vii. 51.)

O let not this day pass without some searching questions into your own heart as to the use which you have made of the gift of such excellent knowledge. Remember those solemn admonitions of St. Paul, who warns the Thessalonians (1 Thess. v. 19) against quenching the Spirit, and the Ephesians against grieving the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they had been sealed unto the day of redemption. Beware against doing despite to the Spirit of grace. Be watchful for good and against evil, examine your use of past opportunities of doing good, and the measure of your past resistance against evil : and pray and make good resolutions for the time to come. Every disobedience to the guidance of the heavenly light which we have received deprives us for that time at least of a portion of it. Every silencing of the still small voice of the remonstrance of conscience deprives *us, for that time at least*, of spiritual di-

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rection and protection. Every obedience to the world however small, weakens in us the power of our obedience to God, and strengthens the power of the devil against us, for that time at least. And is not that time at least one of sufficient danger? Is it not the stepping-stone to one of a still worse condition of the heart, and that again to one still worse? Are not unbelief and hardness of heart thus daily gaining ground, and is not the danger the more dreadful from the fact that the further a man goes into it, so much the less does he think and care about it, until at last he comes into all the recklessness and defiance of confirmed unbelief? O how shocking is the mocking laugh of the unbeliever! He is triumphing in the degradation and ruin of his nature. He has lost his only friend and is in the power of his worst enemy. So let Christ preach to us from the first words which He uttered upon the cross.

But now let us set ourselves at its foot, and hear further. After His acceptance of the penitent malefactor, and His recommendation of His mother to the care of His beloved disciple St. John, thus accepting him into the place of a brother, and having now hung upon the cross *for the space* of three hours, He gives vent to the

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agony of His spirit in those words which open the prophecy of the twenty-second Psalm concerning His sufferings, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" By which He at once proclaimed who He was, and expressed the preciousness of the sacrifice which He was offering, the heaviness of the curse which He had taken upon Himself for us. (Gal. iii. 13.) We have already seen, in considering the events of yesterday, how that the burden which He had undertaken for man came upon Him in the garden of Gethsemane. Here we find it still heavy upon Him. Are not these the words of extreme anguish indeed? Where shall we look for words of deeper dejection of spirit, of sharper anguish of soul, of a more painful sense of abandonment to the enemy by every friend, even by that who alone stands by the unhappy to the end? Let us open our heart to these words as they fell in company with His precious blood from the cross upon us, and receive them into its inmost secret chamber.

But how shall we understand these words? Had their blessed Speaker indeed given Himself up to despair, as if God had really forsaken Him? Then He had given up our cause, and our faith were vain, and we were yet in our sins,

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and we had cause to despair indeed. The very course of the Psalm from which they are taken shews that their meaning stopped far short of this. And in other Psalms there are found sentences which declare great dejection of mind and fainting of the heart, so as to seem at first sight to denote a painful and desperate feeling of having been forsaken by God. Thus Psalm x. opens with the words, "Why standest Thou afar off, O Lord? why hidest Thou Thyself in times of trouble?" And in Psalm cviii. we find these words, "Wilt not Thou, O God, who hast cast us off! and wilt not Thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?" If we should take these passages by themselves they would seem to express an utter despair of God's favour, and to oppose that Scripture which says, Prov. xv. 29, "The Lord is far from the wicked, but He heareth the prayer of the righteous." But here we must consider that the righteous Person is not only pouring forth the convictions of His own heart, but also telling forth all the thoughts and feelings which are prompted to it by His situation. We always thus tell forth when we come to lay our hearts open before God, and it is one of our means of declaring our complete trust in Him, and any thing but despair. Supposing our nature were

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even without sin, as was the Lord's, yet the thoughts, though not the belief, of God's desertion of us must come into our hearts, when we are cast down into deep dejection of sorrow, and so much the more for our former acquaintance with Him, whom the wicked having never known or felt nigh cannot of course feel far off, or think of being far or near at all. Of course the tempter is not slow in endeavouring to take all advantage of such seasons. And we actually resist him, and relieve our hearts of that which he would fain turn to our disadvantage, by discovering such thoughts to God. Putting them and him together thus before us, we immediately see their true character and will not admit them. And by disclosing them to God we shew that we have nothing to fear from Him, as we have nothing to hide, and by thus casting the burden from us in His sight, we experience still greater fulness of communion with Him, and find Him, instead of being far off, nearer than ever. So far from accepting the thoughts and making them our own, we reject them in the open court of God's presence. And we lay them before Him among the peculiar circumstances of our condition, among the things which are giving us *pain, among the sorrows* which are besetting us,

among the perplexing contradictions which our trial presents. We plead them among the temptations which attend this trial, and this very pleading is at once a manifest token of our resistance, and shews a confidence in God's help.

That this is the true meaning of such seeming expressions of despair is evident from what appears in every Psalm which contains them. We always immediately, or very shortly, meet with sentences which declare the most unbounded confidence and reliance on God's favour, and the most intimate and joyful feeling of His gracious presence. And this never could be in a heart which shortly before had for one single moment yielded to despair. And so in this very Psalm we come upon the words, "He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from him: but when he cried unto Him He heard." Can words more plainly prove that the exclamation, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," do not declare a deliberate and accepted thought of the heart, but the suggestion of our human nature, and the sense of the assault of the tempter taking advantage of its situation? They manifest a thought which the sufferer lays *before God* among the things which grieve Him,

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and of which He endeavours most completely to free Himself by casting it forth before God.

And that this was the case with the Lord is plain, not only from other words of the Psalm, as has just been shewn, but also from His own words which follow. How could He, if He had admitted such thoughts, have uttered in the last extremity of suffering words of such utter resignation, of such unshaken confidence, of such unflinching trust in the present help and sure deliverance of God, as these, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

But at the same time do we not discover in these words the extreme suffering of the soul of the Saviour, and how the agony which had begun in the garden was prolonged on the cross? He was the Son of Man in an especial manner at this moment when He was performing the act upon which all His mediation for man turned, and was suffering for man. Therefore they denote that His human nature was brought to such an extremity of agony, into such dimness of anguish, into such desolation of soul, that the thoughts of God having forsaken Him could not but thrust themselves upon His mind from the very condition of that human nature which He had taken upon Him, and though cast away,

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come again, for twice He cries, "My God." And amid these sufferings surely must be counted those which are endured from temptation. For we are assured that, though Satan had been overcome in the wilderness, he did not give up all further attempts. On the contrary it is especially remarked that when the devil had ended all the temptation he departed from Him for a season, and not for ever after. Would he then be wanting to his grand and final opportunity? The last hours of our suffering nature are known from man's own experience to be so favourable to his assaults, that in our burial-service we especially pray to Almighty God that He "would not suffer us, at our last hour, for any pains of death to fall from Him." But here too the tempter received his final overthrow. The last words of our Lord, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," declare the victory gained by the Captain of our salvation, and prove that He is now qualified "to succour them that are tempted." (Heb. ii. 18.)

No sooner had He given up the ghost than the veil of the temple was rent in twain. It separated the holy place, which was a type of *earth*, from the holy of holies, which was a type of *heaven*. And therefore the rending of it not

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only declared the further inutility of the worship of the temple with its sacrifices : but also that the true High-Priest (Heb. ix.) having offered and finished the true sacrifice on earth, was now passing on His way to heaven to make intercession for His people there. And moreover this veil represented His body, which was rent by death, which death was necessary to His passing into heaven, and to His performing (Heb. x. 20) the rest of His office of atonement there. And it signified further that heaven, which had been shut against sinful man, was now open to him once again ; but open to him, not in a natural way, as when the door of a house is opened to admit one that knocks, but as when a house is entered by violence through a breach in the wall. The Son of God made the breach by the power of His violent and bloody death. And even so all those He is not ashamed to call brethren must enter by violence, through struggle and strife of unremitted endeavour.

And now let us lift up our eyes from Calvary and the temple, and adore Him that sitteth at the right hand of God in glory. What a stupendous reach of sight do we go through ! Must we not confess that even the words of David *seem to fail us here*, when he says, " As the

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heaven is high above the earth, so great is mercy towards them that fear Him?" (Ps. 11.) Are we duly sensible of such things? we in the habit of mortifying ourselves in conformity with the sufferings of the Son of Man in order to our experiencing lively earnestness of being glorified together with Him? Let then this be one indeed of constraint, of self-examination, of self-judgment, of self-abasement. Nor let us rise from our knees until we have attained in our hearts to that sense of unworthiness through which alone we can be made considerate and therefore faithful stewards of the gifts of this high calling which we have received.

DEVOTION.

MOST merciful, most blessed Jesus, with confused and lowly hearts we humble ourselves before Thee this day, the day of Thy cross; we scarce dare to look up or speak unto Thee, for we feel ourselves to be stained with blood, even with Thy blood, and to have lifted up our hands against Thee. What can we say unto Thee, or how can we express our unworthiness? We must needs speak with a stammering tongue; we are not free from Thy blood. Though

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did not cry against Thee "crucify Him," neither did we spit upon Thee, nor buffet Thee, nor mock Thee, nor beat Thee with the palm of our hands, yet together with all mankind we had part in the shedding of Thy blood; our sins, with the sins of the world, drew Thee to the cross and made Thee out of Thy love to taste the bitterness of death. Yea, if we had no part in Thy death, we have no part in the fruit of Thy death; Thou art no atonement for us except Thou didst suffer for our sins.

O most loving Jesus, Thou didst indeed suffer for our sakes; we did indeed have our part in the deed of them that slew Thee; we confess ourselves to have added by our sins to the sorrows of Thy death. It is our hope against the hour of our own death that Thou didst bear the sharpest pains thereof. We look to Thy sufferings as our release from eternal suffering, to Thy death as our means of escape from eternal death. In Thy cross, though it speaks of our great guilt and shame, is our glory and hope of life. What hope have we but in Thee as the ransom of the world, Thy blood being the precious price of our guilty souls, that were sold under sin, dead in trespasses and sins, utterly condemned.

We kneel therefore, O Lord, this day at the foot of Thy cross; we put before the eyes of our soul the spectacle of Thy passion, that we may see the dreadfulfulness of our guilt and the unsearchable riches of Thy love. Behold, our souls hear Thine exceeding bitter groaning and cries; we see Thy temples stained with Thy blood from the sharpness of Thy crown—Thy feet and Thy hands torn with the *nails*—Thy great thirst—Thy fainting for

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thirst—Thy pains in dying, suffered for many hours—the bowing of Thy head—the giving up of the ghost. We kneel before Thee both hearing and seeing these things. Never was sorrow like unto Thy sorrow, nor death like unto Thy death, when Thou wert laden with all our sins and with all the pains of death due unto all.

O blessed Jesus, how should we hate ourselves for our sins when we consider the vengeance upon sin which Thou didst bear to save us from wrath! How should we love Thee, who didst consent to bear our sorrows and to take upon Thee in our stead the wrath of the Father, the bitterness of our death, and the curse wherewith we should have been accursed! May we remember the cross when evil affections inflame our hearts and when sin tempts; may we see with our soul Thy tears, Thy blood, Thy agony, Thy most painful dying, when evil thoughts rise up and we incline unto evil. May we remember Thy love upon the cross when we are allured to cast our love on other things than Thee. Help us, O Lord our Saviour, in some sort to return Thy love by giving ourselves to Thee all the days of our life. O knit our heart unto Thee. Thee do we confess to be our only Saviour. O Son of David, O Lamb of God, O Prince of peace, Thou art our Redeemer, Thou the Author and Finisher of our faith. Blessed be Thy name above every name. Amen.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

EASTER EVE.

The Lord's body in the sepulchre—the tomb sealed—the women prepare for anointing the body.

How poorly would one judge of the real nature of the Sabbath, who looked only to the outward observance of it, merely to the abstaining from labour, and the assembling in worship before God. As well may he judge man's heart from his looks. But let him look to that inner part which lies under all this, and which gives it life and meaning. Let him think of the contrite and thankful spirit which is especially awake to its heavenly calling on that day, and turns the repose of the body from the cares and toils of this world to the account of its uninterrupted occupation in the concerns of the world to come. Let him turn to the visions of God's glory then sought and obtained by holy meditation, to the comfort and courage flowing into the heart in answer to earnest prayer, to the fuller clearness of knowledge *which ministers surer and more certain*

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hope to the mind of the diligent seeker of truth. Then, and not until then, he will have come to something like a proper notion of the nature of the day.

And in like manner what a shallow understanding, what a dull feeling, would he bring to the sepulchre of our Lord, in which His body was lying on this, the Sabbath-day of the Jews, if he should go no further than the view of the tomb and the body, and should only look at His burial. But indeed this would be nothing more than an example on a remarkable occasion of the thoughtlessness which is too commonly exhibited at a burial. Of those who see the coffin resting at the bottom of the grave, after the body has been solemnly committed to the dust, how few consider what the spirit is doing meanwhile, how that is exercising its immortality now that it has been separated from its mortal partner.

Let us look then beyond the sepulchre of the Lord, and let us consider what was the condition of His spirit. For, as says St. Peter, being "put to death in the flesh He was quickened by the Spirit." (1 Pet. iii. 18.) He had told His penitent fellow-sufferer, that on that day he should be with Him in paradise. In that blessed region *therefore*, amid the wide world of departed spirits

He was remaining in His spirit until the day of His resurrection. And in the same place we are thus assured will be received the spirits of all that depart this world in such faith in Him as worked by love and perfected holiness in the fear of God. Such will be their rest until the Lord shall descend from heaven at the last day, and raising their bodies from the grave in glory, power, and incorruption, shall unite them to their spirits, and thus His saints shall dwell together with Him in heaven for evermore.

O how exalting, how comfortable is such a thought when we are perplexed and troubled with the dimness and the misery of this sinful world, and when, above all, we have been deprived by the hand of death of some most dear, most estimable friend. But then, on the other hand, how dreadful, how overwhelming with horror is the thought of the state which is the contrary to this, and to which must be consigned the spirits of those who have lived lives the contrary to the lives of these true servants of the Lord. What a terrible earnest of the judgment to come must their condition be ; what a fearful looking out for it. If the devils, who are reserved for the judgment of the last day, cried out on the sight of Jesus, "*What have we to do with Thee, Jesus*

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Thou Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" how great must be their terror as the wicked find the day of fiery judgment approaching, and the time of their everlasting torment at hand.

It seems most strange that men can so commonly put out of sight so tremendous a consequence of a sinful life, and yet they do, and the more so in proportion to the danger of its befalling them. For sin, in proportion as it awakes all our desires to the enjoyment of this world, draws off all our attention from the world to come. It reverses the order of God, according to which the carnal world is the night, the spiritual world is the day, and looks to the other world for the sound and unbroken sleep after the bustling and enjoyable day of this world. How terribly will that sleep be broken by the blast of the last trump, if sleep that can be called which is like the watches of the night passed by the criminal before the morning of his execution.

Is it not high time then to remember that we have been buried with Him in baptism? (Col. ii. 12.) Even as His body lay in the tomb, separated entirely from this world until the time that *He* should rise and walk in it again in His *glorified* body, so we, who were by nature dead

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in sin, have by repentance become dead unto sin, mortifying all our corrupt affections, and put under the expressive emblem of water, have, as it were, been buried as under ground, and so been buried with Him who has received us unto Him in that Sacrament, that He may raise us up again to walk this world henceforward in newness of life, with a body not doing its former lusts, but presented to Him a living sacrifice, and doing His will, and maintained in incorruptness of affection, and in diligence of obedience. Such is our Christian calling; of such we are especially reminded on this day. We profess to have undergone an utter separation from a sinful world, as utter as that which befalls the buried body. We have become blind to its false and luring lights, as if the darkness of the grave was around us. We have become deaf to its sounds of evil persuasion, and are removed out of reach of touching and tasting its forbidden pleasures. We strive to keep ourselves as insensible as the corpse in the grave to its unholy delusions. As we have hope in Christ, that we should make our grave with Him after death, by our spirit going to that paradise which His spirit consecrated for His people, while His body rested in the grave; so do *we strive to make good these particulars of*

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our profession, to make real that which has been represented to us both in a lively and life-giving figure of an act of the Captain of our salvation. We consider that we are walking this world in a body which has been raised from the spiritual grave, from death unto sin; that our old man has been crucified, dead, and buried, with Christ (Rom. vi. 6); that we are risen in the new man which is created after His image in righteousness and true holiness. (Eph. iv. 22; Col. iii. 9, 10.) Our insensibility to this world has led to sensibility to the world to come. Our eyes are open to its glory, our ears to its joyful sounds, and our hands handle the Word of life, and we cry with Thomas, "My Lord! and my God."

What a shelter have we indeed in the grave of Christ from the assaults of this world's temptations. There we see lying in death the body of Him who so loved us as to lay down His life for our sakes. Has not this lifeless body still a voice for us? If our ears be open, as a Christian's should, do we not hear Him crying out, "Will you forget Me and My sayings? Will you not for the love of Me keep yourself dead to that sin to save you from which I died, and lay in the *grave*? Will you not mortify that affection, which

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threatens to be unruly, for My sake, who suffered the death and burial of My body, that you might be alive unto righteousness and God? Cast the eyes of your mind on the corpse of Me, your dearest Friend, in the grave, and then can you cast them with a consenting look upon those things which you know that I condemn? With your only true Friend lying thus before you, can you make friendship with any one or any thing concerned with those powers of sin and principalities of darkness which put Me to the death of the cross? Away then with the temptation from thine eyes. Hide them from it with Me in My grave, and raise them up again in that newness of sight which shall entirely lose it in the glorious spectacle which is set before them."

Here is a voice crying to us from the ground which has been sprinkled with His blood, and speaking better things than that of Abel: not crying unto God, as did his, for vengeance, except upon such as crucify Him afresh: but uttering the cry of blessing, of kindly encouragement, of friendly admonition, and of peace with God, to all that are partakers in His death. This is the voice for our ears. Let us have ears to hear. We must obey this voice from below before we can *hope to hear that voice from above which*

shall say, "Come, ye blessed children of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

Hearing this voice we are in company with the Lord in His grave. But what if we hear it not? In whose company are we then? If we seek to stifle this voice, to close the tomb of the Lord by shutting our eyes upon His buried body in forgetfulness and disregard of His death, and by neither partaking of His death by death unto sin, nor of His resurrection to life by newness of life, are we not then in the company of those wicked infidels, the chief priests and Pharisees, who, after having crucified Him, sought to make all sure by setting a seal upon His tomb? Surely we are. If we have not made Christ to burst His sepulchre for us, by our following Him in a new life unto God, what must be at least the secret, if not the avowed, wish of our hearts? Is it not that Christ may never have risen, that so He may never judge? No man wishes for condemnation, and therefore such a wish must be lurking in the heart which will not consent to the burial with Christ that it may be raised up with Him. A most horrible wish indeed, which few dare to express to themselves, and yet all *must find* within them, if their love of the world

and the carelessness of their profession, would allow them a few moments of strict and sincere self-examination. Does not common sense and reason tell us that if we shut our eyes to the prospect of the world to come, we shut them to Christ returning as Judge, we shut them to His being in heaven, we shut them to His having ascended thither, we shut them therefore to His having risen again, we therefore set the seal upon His sepulchre? But men will not confess to such shutting of the eyes to the future. They will insist that they do expect a life after death, and the reappearance of Christ to bestow it. Yet of what nature is their expectation? It is merely not caring sufficiently to oppose a general belief, which has been familiar to them from childhood. Of course they do not like the notion of there not being something for them after this life, but they are too much engrossed with the thoughts of this life to consider seriously what that something will be. They are therefore fain to comply with the expression of the general belief, accepting it at the same time in a generally comfortable sense, by carefully avoiding all particulars of man's guilt, and closely clinging to all that can be generally said concerning God's mercy. *But if this be not shutting the eyes, it*

is blinking with them : and that surely is less dangerous, perhaps more so, as persons can find their road more perplexed by twilight than by darkness. Self-examination would soon cover this to them, if they had the heart to come upon it. Then they would be convinced they have not really given one steady look forward to the great day. For how can that be called a look which sees nothing, and at once hastily skims over the prospect afraid of resting upon any one object, unwilling to understand the scene presented to it, and above all to look at the grand object of all in that spectacle, who is the Son of Man on the throne of His glory putting questions, as Judge, to those who are brought before Him, and demanding (Matt. 25) of them how they have treated Him in so far as He was represented to them in His brethren upon earth ? Of what use will be such a confession accompanied perhaps with the ejaculation (which is not meant to go quite for nothing), “I am indeed a poor sinner, but the Lord is infinitely merciful, and in His mercy I trust ?” Once self-examination comes, how do such professions vanish away, like the thin and floating smoke which conceals the horrible details of the *flagration*. Then the closely questioned

science, pressed and fretted, strikes forth a light which brings every thing before the mind's eye. And as soon as ever the guilt of the heart is discerned, then also is discerned the Judge upon His throne. Then comes the earnest cry for a Mediator between themselves and the Lord their God, who is a consuming fire. In that very Judge they are bidden to see Him, and moreover to be reconciled to their adversary quickly, ere yet they be haled out of this world into that region and state which is preparatory to their trial, and in which they must abide by the account which they are able to give of their stewardship of this world. Finding their only Mediator in Him who died on the cross, now they perceive how thoroughly they had in their former life been of the company of the chief priests and Pharisees in sealing the sepulchre. Having never died to their sins, or even ever entertained a serious resolution of so doing, they had never so much as made the first step in the mediation of Christ. Indeed they may be said to have sealed the tomb that Christ's body might not enter thither rather than sealed it after it was there. How utterly ignorant therefore must they have been of any further step, how utterly must they have been *unused to the employment of His intercession in*

heaven, and have lived without earnest and a
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consequences, in its easy overlooking of the
and severe character of judgment to come ?
is it not an anxious question for us at all ti

not only, "How far have I formerly consented to this state of things," but also, "how far am I now resisting it?" Is the sepulchre shut for me with the thoughtless world, or is it open to me with those loving and devoted servants of the Lord, who are on this day represented by the women who, having followed Him all the way from Galilee, would not end their ministry but with the last sight that they could obtain of His body, and with the last duties that they could render to it?

How contrary indeed was their conduct to that which we have been considering: contrary as love, as truth, as gentleness, can be to hatred, falsehood, and violence. If we turned a look to the others for a warning, let us now turn to these for encouragement.

It is true that they understood, no more than the Pharisees, the force of the words, "After three days I will rise again." In this misapprehension they shared with the very Apostles of the Lord, who "as yet knew not the Scripture, (John. xx. 9,) that He must rise again from the dead." But they did according to the best of their knowledge, and the purest of their affections. While the other party ever wilfully *misunderstood the words of Jesus*, and now en-

deavoured with the utmost of their malice to prove Him to have been an impostor, were following up that deed of Mary, the sister of Lazarus, which won for her such a blessing from her Lord ; they were about to accomplish that of which her anointing had been accepted as the forerunner. They had already on the previous evening, before to-day's Sabbath began, it began with sunset, and ended with the next day,) taken especial notice of the place where the body had been laid, and as soon as this sunset ended the Sabbath and left them they lost no time in going to buy the spices and perfumed oils with which it was customary to anoint the bodies of the dead. Though the observance of the Sabbath prevented them from visiting the tomb, and bade them keep still, yet they lost not sight of it in their hearts. It was the last thing they had done before the commandment to rest began. It was the first thing to be done soon as it ended. They took upon themselves that office which belonged to the nearest and dearest friends of the dead, and put the charge to that ministry to His necessities which had begun in Galilee and continued to the end, not deterred from it even by the dreadful sight of the cross. None of the Apostles and disci-

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appear to have had part in this work, which might by the custom of the country have been left to women. But there seems a delightful suitableness in the fact of the daughters of Eve thus ministering with unflinching faithfulness and love to the seed which had now bruised the serpent's head, in destroying his work of sin upon the cross. And they stand out as examples indeed to all their sex, to whom St. Paul says, in especial reference to this promised seed of the woman, "She shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety." (1 Tim. ii. 15.)

O how differently does the Sabbath of the Lord's day interpose with too many who should have a perfect knowledge of that Christ whom these women as yet loved more than they knew, while those persons know more than they love. The past week has been given up entirely to the world, and they think it a great matter, when they rise on the first day of the week, that they do not resume their occupations. But where are their hearts? Are not their occupations still going on as actively as ever there in too many? While their lips are moving to the sound of prayer, and their ears are hearing the word of God, is not the *attention* too often engrossed by one

EASTER EVE.

thought rising up after another, and calling it to the things of this world? And should there be any wonder at this? Can the heart change all at once from unintermitted service of the world to uninterrupted service of God? Even they, who make every day holy by keeping the Lord continually before them, and dwelling in His house by a settled frame of heart, in which all things, even of this world, are done as unto the Lord, even they find it proper to usher in the Lord's day with a special preparation, and to search the house of their hearts that there be no leaven of the vanity, sin, and distractions of this world, in them.

The last work that these women left off for the keeping of the Sabbath was a work of love, even of love to Christ. The first work that they resumed was the continuation of that work. O here is a lesson for us indeed! What kind of work is it which the Lord's day comes to cut into two with us? Alas, in how many cases is the Saturday night made the occasion for worldly and often decidedly sinful amusement, and to a late hour, on the very ground of the rest of the morrow which allows them to rise later and less fit for work than usual! How often is the sinful *indulgence* of the Saturday prolonged through

EASTER EVE.

the Sunday, and continued to the Monday, and the day of the Lord washed out and expunged from the calendar of the week with the flood of drunkenness! And even when it has been kept with outward decency, is it not by many suffered to go clean out of mind again on the Monday, as the clothes appropriate to it from the body? But it should have come in to us with the perfume of the Lord's service during the past week, and then it would go out with an additional and essentially fragrant perfume of its own, and impart it to the coming week. Thus we may look to the example of these women, who hailed the Sabbath with eyes which had been taken off from the sepulchre of the Lord, and bought the perfumes for His body as soon as it was ended.

Remember then on this day how its evening was passed by these devoted servants of the Lord, and do thou likewise, not only in this particular week, but throughout every week of the year. Be not among those who take advantage of its being the eve of a day of repose to dedicate it to Belial. "What concord hath Christ with Belial?" asks the Apostle St. Paul. (2 Cor. vi. 15.) On this evening thy Saviour was lying in the grave, and was about to rise next morning from the dead. *If then you be truly a Christian,*

EASTER EVE.

having Him dwelling in your heart by faith, and loving Him and keeping His sayings, how is it possible that you should do any thing which is not in accordance with the solemn thoughts which the occasion should weekly bring? Should you not be buried with Him in His grave by entering upon that especial part of the death unto sin, which consists in mortifying the heart by self-examination, and the humble confession which must follow it? Then, and only then, will you have made proper preparation for the morrow. Then, and then only, will you be enabled to rise upon it, with that holy cheerfulness which marks him who has risen with his Lord.

DEVOTION.

IN great peace, O blessed Jesus, didst Thou rest this day from Thy very grievous work of very tender love. This was the Sabbath when Thou didst find rest for Thy crucified body in the stillness of Joseph's tomb. This was the Sabbath when Thy soul did enter into still *better rest*, going into Paradise, where Thou hadst joy

EASTER EVE.

felicity with the spirits of Thy saints. This was the Sabbath, the high day, when both in soul and body Thou didst rest for ever from all the suffering of all Thy holy life, and especially from those last exceeding and sufferings wherewith Thou didst make peace through the cross.

Blessed was the work which Thou didst finish ; and this, the day of Thy rest, Thou couldest look back and see that it was "very good ;" very good as a show-forth of Thy divine goodness and love ; very good in the fruits thereof, even the redemption and regeneration of mankind. And now Thou couldest rejoice over the finished task ; now couldest Thou see of the past travail Thy soul and be satisfied ; now Thy Father could converse with Thee in Thy perfect love and in Thy perfect work of redemption. For Thou didst not break off Thy work in the midst ; Thou didst not come down from the cross straightway to destroy those murderers and to burn up their city ; Thou didst not pray Thy Father to send legions of angels to deliver Thee ; Thou didst not turn away from Thee the cup of affliction, but didst drink even to the dregs. Thou didst in all things and to the end, finish the work which Thy Father gave Thee to do. And now, Lord, Thou didst take Thy sleep. And this is how we think of Thee in Thy repose after Thy great fight and afflictions, ere Thou didst openly triumph. This day behold Thee where we would wish ourselves to be when our end cometh. In that rest of Thy body we have hope of resting in Thee with our bodies when they shall. In that tarrying of Thy soul in Paradise we have

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hope of a joyful rest for our souls with the souls saints who have fallen asleep in Thee. O give us, this rest. May we sleep in dust, even as Thou sleep; may our souls be preserved till the judgment that good place where Thy soul did sojourn in peace. We desire to be with Thee after death through Thy mercy to find our portion amongst those who are at rest.

Enable us, O Lord, to follow Thy example in all living while we are in the world. Already we have died and been buried, buried by baptism unto Thee. O grant that the old man may not be raised up nor worldly affections revive; grant that we may not be dead unto sin, or die afresh unto sin if sin has not been forgiven. O Saviour, save us from living unto sin; save us from being dead to heavenly things; save us from dying eternally in soul, in body. Save us for Thy mercies' sake most merciful. Grant us to live unto Thee and unto Thee, that whether we live or whether we may be Thine—Thine in life, Thine in death, after death, Thine eternally in the presence of God.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

THE
CLOSING DAYS
OF
CHRIST'S MINISTRY ON EARTH;
OR,
THE EVENTS OF THE LIFE AND DEATH
OF
Our Blessed Lord
DURING
PASSION OR HOLY WEEK,
AND FROM THAT TIME TILL THE ASCENSION.

ACCORDING TO THE
CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF TOWNSEND.

NOTICE.

THE life of our blessed Lord Christ, the GOD and Saviour of mankind, is the special object of the Christian's contemplation, and at all times humbly to follow Him, is at once our privilege and duty. How fitting is it then, at this holy season, to contemplate His every word and work, His humiliation, His sufferings, His glory, when we are called by the Church, in communion with the saints of every age and country to fast and pray, remembering Him who was wounded for our offences and smitten for our transgression, and following Him in lowliness, patience, and charity, ordered by the governance of His Holy Spirit. How should we strive in the reading of the Holy Gospels, to tread over again the ground He trod in the days of His abasement and agony, and to follow Him through Gethsemane to Calvary, where attended by His Blessed Mother, the penitent Magdalene, and the beloved disciple, examples of that faith, and hope, and love, with which we too should strive to linger about the cross, He shed His precious blood, the atonement for our sins, that so we may be the better fitted to rejoice here in the remembrance of His triumph over death and hell, and hereafter, through His merits, be partakers of His glory with Him in the morning of the resurrection to eternal life.

To aid the humble-minded in the approaching season, this short history of the latter days of our Master's life is presented in a simple form, with full reference to the Holy Scripture, compiled from a source, at least beyond the power of the Editor to improve, with the simple end of aiding his brethren to live more in communion with the lowly JESUS, during the days in *which the Church universal contemplates His day of bitter trial, His triumph, and His glory.*

THE EVENTS OF HOLY WEEK.

PALM SUNDAY,

Or the Sunday next before Easter.

OUR Saviour came to Bethany six days before Passover, and was received at the house of Simon the leper. Here Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead sat at meat with Him *, Martha served, and Mary anointed Him with the ointment of spikenard.

Matt. xxvi. 6. | S. Mark xiv. 3. |

| *S. John xii. 2.

On Sunday morning Christ sent for the ass's colts, and entered into Jerusalem, the people laying branches of palm trees and their garments in the way, and the children singing Hosannas.

Matt. xxi. 8. | S. Mark xi. 8. | S. Luke xix. 36. | S. John xii. 12.

As He came near, He wept over the city.

He then drove out the buyers and sellers from the temple, and healed the blind and lame.

Some Greeks then desired to see Jesus, and

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

afterwards, while He spake to His disciples, calling on them to receive Him, a voice *was heard from heaven. Christ then left the city, and went back to Bethany.

S. Matt. xxi. 12. | S. Mark xi. 11. | S. Luke xix. 41. | S. John xii. * 28, 44.

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

On Monday Christ returned into the city of Jerusalem, and on His way cursed the barren fig-tree.

He went a second time into the temple, and cast out those that bought and sold. The scribes and chief priests then sought to destroy Him, but the evening came, and He went out of the city.

S. Matt. xxi. 18. | S. Mark xi. 12. | S. Luke xix. 45. |

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

On Tuesday morning Christ came back to Jerusalem with His disciples, and passing by, saw the barren fig-tree withered away. As He went He discoursed of faith and prayer and forgiveness.

S. Matt. xxi. 21. | S. Mark xi. 20. \ , \

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

When in the temple, the scribes and elders questioned Christ's authority. He asked them in reply, of John the Baptist; and spake to them the parables of

The father and his two sons.

The vineyard let out to husbandmen.

The marriage feast and wedding garment.

S. Matt. xxi. xxii. | S. Mark xi. xii. | S. Luke xx. 1. |

The Pharisees then sent the Herodians with some of the tribute money, to entangle Him in His talk. The Sadducees also asked Him of the resurrection. And the Pharisees tempted Him, asking, Which was the great commandment?

S. Matt. xxii. 15. | S. Mark xii. 13. | S. Luke xx. 20. |

Our Lord then enjoined on the disciples obedience to the scribes and Pharisees who sat in Moses' seat; but warned them not to follow their works, and to call no man father or master on earth.

He then pronounced the eight woes.

| S. Matt. xxiii. 1, 13. |

While He sat near the treasury, the poor widow offered her two mites; and Christ went out of the temple.

/ S. Mark xii. 41. | S. Luke xxi. 1. \

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

As He went out, He addressed the Jews for the last time,—foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple,—and the end of the world.

He then spake the parables of

The ten virgins.

The talents.

The sheep and the goats.

And at night He went out and abode in the Mount of Olives.

S. Matt. xxiv. xxv. | S. Mark xiii. 1. | S. Luke xxi. 5, 37. |

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

Christ foretold His disciples that He would be betrayed and crucified. The chief priests then assembled and took counsel against Him, but were afraid. In the mean time Judas Iscariot, tempted by the devil, promised to betray Him for thirty pieces of silver.

S. Matt. xxvi. | S. Mark xiv. | S. Luke xxii. |

THURSDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

THURSDAY IN HOLY WEEK,

(*Commonly called* MAUNDAY THURSDAY.)

Our blessed Lord sent His disciples to prepare the Passover for Him, and having come to supper, He sat down and the twelve with Him. During supper He reproved them for striving which should be greatest, and rising up He washed His disciples' feet.

S. Matt. xxvi. 17. | S. Mark xiv. 12. | S. Luke xxii. 7. | S. John xiii. 1.

He then foretold that Judas would betray Him, and Judas having received the sop, went out. He next warned Peter, and foretold how he would thrice deny Him.

S. Matt. xxvi. 21. | S. Mark xiv. 18. | S. Luke xxii. 21, 31. | S. John xiii. 18.

After this, the Lord took bread and the cup and gave to His Apostles the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, bidding them also,

“DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.”

S. Matt. xxvi. 26. | S. Mark xiv. 22. | S. Luke xxii. 19. \

THURSDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

He then spake to them many comforting words. He bid them not be troubled. He taught, that He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He promised to send unto them the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and then gave to them His "Peace."

| S. John xiv. |

The Lord then said, *Arise, let us go hence*, and so saying, they sang an hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

S. Matt. xxvi. 30. | S. Mark xiv. 26. | S. Luke xxii. 39. |

As they went, our Saviour discoursed of Himself as the True Vine; bade them abide in Him and keep His commandments; He bid them prepare for persecution, but again promised them the gifts of the Comforter, the Spirit of truth. He told them He should soon leave them, and promised that whatever they asked in His name, they should receive and have peace in Him.

| S. John xv. xvi. |

Having so spoken, He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and prayed for His people, that all might be one, even as He and the Father are *one*.

| S. John xvii. \

THURSDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

Our Lord again warned Peter, and then went with him, and James, and John, to the garden of Gethsemane, where they fell asleep while their Master was in agony. An angel from heaven strengthening Him.

S. Matt. xxvi. 34. | S. Mark xiv. 32. | S. Luke xxii. 39. | S. John xviii. 1.

Soon after this, Judas came with a multitude of persons and betrayed the Lord. They laid hands on Jesus, and took Him. Peter struck off the servant's ear, and the Lord healed it. The disciples forsook Him and fled. And the Lord was led away to Annas, and to Caiaphas the high-priest — where He was examined, condemned, insulted, buffeted, spit upon.

S. Matt. xxvi. 47. | S. Mark xiv. 43. | S. Luke xxii. 47. | S. John xviii. 2.

After Midnight.

While our Lord was thus insulted, Peter was warming himself, and thrice denied his Master.

S. Matt. xxvi. 69. | S. Mark xiv. 66. | S. Luke xxii. 56. | S. John xviii. 17.

FRIDAY IN HOLY WEEK,
Commonly called GOOD FRIDAY.

EARLY IN THE MORNING.

Jesus was led to the high-priest and to the council as soon as it was day, when He confessed Himself to be the Son of God.

S. Matt. xxvi. 64. | S. Mark xiv. 62. | S. Luke xxii. 70. |

In the meantime, Judas repented and hanged himself. But the Lord was led bound to Pilate, and afterwards* sent to Herod, who mocked Him and sent Him back to Pilate.

S. Matt. xxvii. 3. | S. Mark xv. 1. | *S. Luke xxiii. 1. | S. John xviii. 28.

Pilate declared Him innocent, but the Jews called out "Crucify Him;" and again*, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," preferring Barabbas the robber to Jesus who was called Christ.

*S. Matt. xxvii. 25. | S. Mark xv. 14. | S. Luke xxiii. 21. | S. John xix. 6.

Jesus was then scourged, and, notwithstanding the entreaties of Pilate's wife and his own conscience, delivered up to be crucified—led away to the common hall—crowned with thorns—mocked—spit upon—smitten.

S. Matt. xxvii. 26. | S. Mark xv. 19. | S. Luke xxiii. 24. | S. John xix. 3.

FRIDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

(*The Third Hour.*) *Nine o'clock.*

Jesus bearing His cross, which was afterwards laid on Simon of Cyrene, was followed by the women bewailing Him, and by others.

S. Matt. xxvii. 31. | S. Mark xv. 20. | S. Luke xxiii. 26. | S. John xix. 16:

He was taken to Golgotha, where vinegar and gall, wine and myrrh were offered to Him ; and here on Mount Calvary He was nailed to the cross, and crucified between two malefactors.

Jesus said, *Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.*

| S. Luke xxiii. 34. |

The soldiers then parted His garments, and cast lots for His vesture. The priests and people, and passers by derided Him. One of the malefactors confessed his sins, and confessed Christ ; to him

Jesus said, *Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.*

| S. Luke xxiii. 40. |

Then seeing His mother and the beloved disciple standing by the cross,

Jesus said, *Woman, behold thy Son! Behold thy mother!*

| S. John xix. 25. |

FRIDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

(*The Sixth Hour.*) *Twelve o'clock. Noon.*

Darkness came over all the earth.

S. Matt. xxvii. 45. | S. Mark xv. 33. | S. Luke xxiii. 44. |

Then stood there by the cross of Jesus, His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene, with the disciple whom He loved.

| S. John xix. 25. |

(*The Ninth Hour.*) *Three o'clock.*

At this hour, crying with a loud voice,
Jesus said, *Eloi! Eloi! Lama sabacthani!*
(*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me.*)

S. Matt. xxvii. 46. | S. Mark xv. 34. |

Jesus said, *I thirst.*

| S. John xix. 28. |

When they heard this, they brought Him a sponge full of vinegar, which He received, and afterwards

Jesus said, *It is finished.*

S. Matt. xxvii. 48. | S. Mark xv. 36. | S. Luke xxiii. 46. | S. John xix. 30.

And when He had cried again with a loud voice,

Jesus said, *Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.*

| S. Luke xxiii. 46. |

FRIDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

And when He had said this, He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. Then the veil of the temple was rent, and many graves opened. The soldiers brake the legs of the two malefactors, and coming to Jesus, one pierced His side, and there came thereout blood and water.

| S. John xix. 31. |

IN THE EVENING.

Joseph of Arimathea begged the body of Jesus, took it down from the cross, and with Nicodemus laid it in his own new tomb, the women still following.

. Matt. xxvii. 57. | S. Mark xv. 43. | S. Luke xxiii. 50. | S. John xix. 38.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary beheld

| S. Mark xv. 47. |

where it was laid, and sat over against the sepulchre until the beginning of the sabbath.

| S. Matt. xxvii. 61. |

The other women returned home and prepared spices and ointments.

/ S. Luke xxiii. 56. |

SATURDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

SATURDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

Commonly called EASTER EVE.

They rested the sabbath day according to commandment.

| S. Luke xxiii. 56. |

The body of our Lord lay in the sepulchre being dead in the body, but quickened by the Spirit. He went and preached unto the saints in prison.

| 1 S. Peter iii. 19. |

At the end of the day the chief priests and Pharisees asked Pilate for a guard of soldiers.

| S. Matt. xxvii. 62. |

and they sealed the sepulchre, and set a watch.

When the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalen and the other women brought spices to anoint the body of the Lord.

| S. Mark xvi. 1. |

Easter Sunday,

(THE FIRST LORD'S DAY.)

As it began to dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary set forth to the sepulchre.

The angel of the Lord rolled away the stone.

S. Matt. xxviii. 1. | S. Mark xvi. 2. | ; | S. John xx. 1.

The guards fled—the bodies of the saints that slept arose. (S. Matt. xxviii. 3—11; xxvii. 52.)

The two Maries and Salome came to see the sepulchre. Mary Magdalene* leaving the others runs to tell S. Peter—Salome and the other Mary go in and see the angel.

S. Matt. xxviii. 5. | S. Mark xvi. 2. | | *S. John xx. 2. |

S. Peter and S. John followed soon after, and went in. Mary Magdalene remained without weeping.

| S. John xx. 3, 11. |

Afterwards another company of women go to the sepulchre with spices, and are told by two angels of our Lord's resurrection.

| S. Luke xxiv. 1. |

THE LORD WAS RISEN.

S. Matt. xxviii. 5, 7.

HALLELUJAH.

The Great Forty Days.

As the life of our blessed Lord Jesus from the hour of His incarnation to that of His glorious resurrection, is the special object of contemplation and hope to each pious Christian; so are those wondrous forty days in which our good Lord lingered here below for the confirmation of our faith, of the greatest importance to the Church as a body. Having finished His work, and having overcome sin and death, He had obtained all power in heaven and earth, the reward of His marvellous love to our sinful race. About to leave this world so far as He could be seen except by faith, He exercised the power which He had obtained, for the benefit of the faithful; in the establishment of His Church; the giving of the Holy Ghost; the bestowing of miraculous and spiritual powers and authority; and in the promise of His perpetual presence, and the dwelling here below of the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

The following arrangement of the wonderful events of these days*, so full of encouragement to the infant Church of Christ, is now commended by the Editor, with whatever blessing it may please God to give it, to the use of his brethren in the happy holy season to which it refers.

* The Editor is indebted for his first thoughts on the importance of this subject to Dr. Moberly's "Discourses on the Sayings of the Great Forty Days."

FROM EASTER MORN UNTIL THE DAY OF OUR LORD'S
ASCENSION.

After the Lord arose, He shewed Himself at
divers times to His disciples and followers.

And thus He shewed Himself

To S. Mary Magdalene when He said

“TOUCH ME NOT.” (S. Mark xvi. 9; S. John xx. 14.)

To her together with the other Mary and
Salome, when He permitted them to hold Him
by the feet and worship Him. (S. Matt. xxviii. 9.)

To S. Peter. (S. Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5.)

To Cleophas and another disciple, when He
conversed with them on the way to Emmaus,
and was afterwards made known to them in
breaking of bread. (S. Mark xvi. 12; S. Luke xxiv. 13.)

To the ELEVEN, excepting Thomas, saying,

“PEACE BE UNTO YOU.” (S. John xx. 19.)

And shewing them His hands and His feet, did
eat before them, (S. Luke xxiv. 36,) and gave them
the commission,

“AS THE FATHER HATH SENT ME, SO SEND I YOU.”

Breathed on them the Holy Ghost, and gave to
them the power, (S. John xx. 23,)

WHOSE SOEVER SINS YE REMIT, THEY ARE REMITTED.”

WHOSE SOEVER SINS YE RETAIN, THEY ARE RETAINED.”

THE GREAT FORTY DAYS.

6. To the ELEVEN, Thomas being present when He upbraided those who had not believed them which had seen Him, (S. Mark xvi. 14,) and again saying,

“PEACE BE UNTO YOU,”

convinced Thomas, shewing him His hands and His side. (S. John xx. 26.)

7. To the ELEVEN on the mountain in Galilee. (S. Matt. xxviii. 16.)

8. To 500 disciples at once. (1 Cor. xv. 6.)

9. To S. Peter, S. Thomas, Nathaniel, and others at the sea of Tiberias, where, after again taking bread, He thrice questioned S. Peter; and thrice gave him the pastoral commission, (S. John xx.)

“FEED MY LAMBS.” “FEED MY SHEEP.”

10. To S. James the Less. (1 Cor. xv. 7.)

11. To all the holy Apostles at Jerusalem; when He opened their understandings to understand the Scriptures, bid them wait there for the promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and then, lastly,

THE GREAT FORTY DAYS.

He led them out as far as Bethany, where
having declared

“ALL POWER IS GIVEN TO ME IN HEAVEN AND EARTH,”

He gave them His commission (S. Matt. xxviii.)

To teach and preach the Gospel,
To baptize all nations,

“IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON,
AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.”

He promised salvation to the faithful,
And threatened damnation to unbelief.

(S. Mark xvi. 16.)

He promised the power to work miracles,
To escape from evil—to heal the sick.
Promised His perpetual presence,

(S. Matt. xxviii. 19.)

“LO I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS.”

He lifted up His hands,

HE BLESSED THEM.

(S. Luke xxiv. 50.)

He was parted from them—He was taken up.
Acts i. 9.)

He was received up into heaven.

(S. Mark xvi. 19.)

THE GREAT FORTY DAYS.

HE SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.

HE MAKETH INTERCESSION FOR US.

(Rom. viii. 34.)

He shall in like manner come again,

(Acts i. 10.)

(And all His saints with Him,)

(Zech. xiv. 5.)

TO JUDGE THE WORLD.

(2 Tim. iv. 1.)

EVEN SO COME, LORD JESUS.

GLORY BE TO THEE, O GOD.

AMEN.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

EASTER DAY.

The Resurrection.

“DUST thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” To you I say these words of God, whosoever you are, for of you and of every man they are true. You are now among living men, it may be in the very prime and fulness of your life, with all the powers of life. Well then, survey yourself and your various limbs; cast your eyes over the several parts of that fleshly frame, so “fearfully and wonderfully made,” that marvellous machinery of flesh and blood; your tongue tastes bitter or pleasant food; your eye wanders over green meadows or crowded streets; your ear is quick in catching sweet sounds or harsh; your limbs carry you where you will; your hands move actively according to your need; your blood flows like a river in your veins. Such you are in the body at this present time, to-day; you are a living man.

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And yet you who are now sitting in your house reading these my words, will soon be, as regards your body, like a clod in the valley, or a stone upon the road, as motionless, as senseless. That ear will not hear though men talked thunder; that eye will not see though the letters of your book shone with fire; that tongue will not speak though kings should give their crowns for a single word; that hand will not feel though coals of fire were thrust into it; that blood will be dried up as a mountain torrent in time of drought. O living man, what will you be in a little while? what will you seem to be as regards your living and breathing frame, but a cold clod of earth crumbling into dust, all shape, all form, all sinews and bones, all flesh and blood, blended together into one confused and withered heap of a little dust. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," for you are one of Adam's sons.

Or if you look round to-day upon wife and children sitting by your side, or on father and mother, or on brothers and sisters, remember that over all that group of kindred a little time will pass, a few hasty years, and then all of you, from the child prattling on the knee, to the silver-haired old man leaning upon his staff, will have *laid down* your bodies in the dust. No more

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will you see the sun, no more sit by the cheerful fire, no more fall into sweet sleep, no more walk over the earth and fulfil your toils, no more laugh or weep, no more taste sweet honey or bitter bread, no more voyage or travel, no more feel warm sunshine or heavy storms; dust ye are, and to dust ye shall return; this *must* be. 'It is appointed unto man once to die;' to the grave we must all descend, we must all meet the touch of that mysterious hand which will chill the blood, glaze the eye, palsy the hand, and make the whole sensitive frame as senseless as a felled tree lying in the wood.

Kings and ploughboys, nobles and mechanics, squires and servants, lawyers and men of war, politicians and plain country folks, all alike must pass through the valley of the shadow of death. We are all marked, like trees for the axe, every man in his turn, some this year, some many years hence, first one, then another, but all at last.

Or cast your eyes over ever so large a crowd; of that living mass of men not one will be alive for long; they will drop off one after another, one of a fever, another of a decline, another suddenly in a fit, another in a storm at sea, another by an accident *on land*, another in battle. 'The ways

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and modes of death are many ; there are many roads to that one door of death ; but all sooner or later will pass through the door, however they come to it.

And are you ready to weep ? So did that heathen monarch weep when he had gathered together an almost countless army, and took his stand upon a hill that he might feast his pride with the spectacle of his power. When the vast multitude filled the plain and he saw the glory of them, with their bright apparel, their silver and gold, their helmets and shining spears, their banners and prancing steeds, and when he thought to rejoice in the sight, an awful sense of mortality smote him suddenly to the heart. " All these," he exclaimed, bursting into tears, " all these will be dead in a hundred years !" And where are they now, all those men of war, with their lusty frames and strong limbs ? where now spear and plume, helmet and steed ? Or where now all the armies that have been gathered since then ? Or where all crowds of former days, all that filled theatres, gazed at triumphs, heard orators, met together for good or evil ? The world is but a sepulchre, a vast tomb, a garden full of tombs, a wide cemetery.

Or turn to the town or village where you live.

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Just think how often it has been filled, how often emptied. Your churchyard has gone on gathering into itself generation after generation. Funerals have come from every house into this as to a common home ; every house has sent its inmates here. Now the funeral passed through the rich man's gate, now from that back street, now from the bustling shop, now from the tavern, now from the retired tradesman's villa, now from the mill, now from the cottage on the heath, now from the parsonage, now from the squire's, now from the square or the terrace. So it has been. Your churchyard is as a honeycomb full of cells, and the cells are sepulchres, and the sepulchres full of the dust of men.

And look now down that line of streets, or those squalid alleys, or those good terraces and squares, at that cluster of cottages, speckling the village green, with children playing at the door, women sitting at work within, men returning home from work, what shall we say of this varied multitude of homes ? The whole makes up but the lesser and grander chambers of one vast inn, the men who call themselves the owners or the occupiers being but guests, pilgrims and travellers, who cannot stay but for a few nights. Oh, what changes the rooms of *all those* houses have seen ! And this

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generation, all those children, all those women, all those men are moving on ; onward, onward, must we all hasten to the dust, whether we think of such things, or whether we think not.

And do you weep as the sense of mortality sweeps over you and strikes your heart ? Have you an horrible dread ? Do you wish there were no such thing as death, or that you could take the wings of the morning, and fly from the spear of death ? Is it a sad thing to speak of death ? Do you wish all that I have said, and all that you yourself know of death, were but a frightful dream to startle you for a minute, and then to be laughed away as a mere shadow of the night ? Do you gaze upon your children and press them to your heart, and as you yearn over them, do you grieve very bitterly at the thought of death taking you from them, or them from you ? Do you gaze upon mother or wife, and hardly dare think that either you will be motherless or your mother childless, you a widower, or your wife a widow ? Well, it is but natural to weep, but natural to have fears of death and to wish there were no death, and to tremble at the thought of the havoc it will make in our homes, turning our happy firesides into *places of bitter remembrances.*

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But while our hearts melt and our eyes fill with tears as the power of death, its necessity, its certainty, rise vividly before our minds, and as we feel ourselves the portions of a dying race, with the seed of death sown in us from our birth, is the melancholy mystery of death all that the heart of man has to fasten upon? Are all these our members to be dissolved and never to live again? O brother, brother in our human nature, brother in partaking of a nature doomed to death, above all brother in Christian hope and in the new birth in Christ and the new nature, death it is true awaits us all, and the grave; but hear what the prophet says, hear it and have hope: "Awake," he exclaims in triumphant strains, "awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead!" Hear the prophecies which the herb of the fields, which our very gardens and lanes and woods speak to us in this time of spring as we pass by, when the dead seed lying for the wintry months bursts forth into life. But above all look, I pray you, to that garden, and to that one tomb in the garden wherein your Lord was laid. I speak not of the garden wherein Adam sinned, or in which death was *passed upon us all* through sin, but of that

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wherein was a sepulchre, the sepulchre wherein death was overcome by One stronger than he, even the great Conqueror both of death and hell, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Follow Mary Magdalene, the sinner and true penitent, on her early pilgrimage on this day. Her love has not suffered her to sleep ; or at least it has broken her slumbers before day ; it has been to her as a brighter light than the sun, for before the sun rose and glared upon her eyes she was up and gone ; while it was yet dark she was on her way with spices for the dead, to embalm the body of One she loved, to keep it a little while from the touches of decay. Follow her to the garden and to the sepulchre, to a new tomb hewn in the rock ; stoop down and look in with her. Lo, in that one look, you learn not only that there must be death, but that there is also the resurrection of the dead ! By faith you look into Jesus' tomb ; and by faith you hear the angel say, " He is risen, He is not here !" risen, as He said ; risen by the divine power that was in Him ; risen as the first-fruits of them that slept, and the first-born of the dead among many brethren ; risen that we also might rise again from the dead, and come forth from *our graves*. He has spoken His " Ephphatha "

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to the stony eyelids of His grave, and the stone has been rolled away, and the light has broken forth. He has again looked upon the world, again seen with His eyes and heard with His ears. Mary's spices this time may be cast away, willingly would she herself cast them to the winds; her precious ointment availed for His burial, but He needs no spices when buried; the loving penitent's gift is not needed here. Christ is risen!

Where is the stone, where is the seal, where the watch? where all the designs of men to secure the tomb? nay, where all the designs of the prince of darkness, all the strength, all the power of death? "Get thee behind Me, Satan," has Christ said here; nay, He has now trodden him and trampled him under His feet; He has bruised his head; He has burst the bonds and cast away the cords from Him; He has rent in twain the chains of death; as Samson He has broken them as though they were but withes; He has risen as a giant refreshed with sleep; the second Adam is in the garden; and the place of death has become the place of life. With His own right hand and with His holy arm hath He gotten Himself the victory; He yielded Himself to *death and suffered Himself to be bound; He*

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was as a lamb led to the slaughter and was slaughtered as a lamb ; He tasted death and was as a captive in the prison of death ; He was chained in the cell of the grave and strongly fastened in ; His human nature felt the pains of death ; His flesh, that once smarted with the thongs, the eye that once wept over Jerusalem, the temples that once bled with the sharpness of the thorns, the hands that were once pierced with the nail, the tongue that had healed the sick, forgiven penitents, rebuked devils, cried out upon the cross, all these, the parts of His body, became as lifeless, as motionless as those of the dead among ourselves. He gave Himself into the enemy's hands.

And then, while death seemed to triumph over the Lord's Christ, Christ triumphed over death ; the captive became the conqueror ; from the hour of His weakness came forth the hour of strength ; His obedience to death became witness of His lordship over it. Satan's power was most destroyed when it seemed at its very height, and when the Lord Jesus appeared even to His disciples to be but as one of them, He proved Himself to be their Lord and their God ; the empty tomb with the grave clothes and the *napkin*, spoke at once of His death, and His *resurrection* from the dead.

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And when we hear the words, "He is not here but is risen," do not those angels who thus comforted the Magdalene seem to stand near us in our church which is in a garden, and the garden full of tombs? Do we not seem to see through Holy Scripture the empty tomb of Christ? And while we have been saddened with bitter thoughts of death, the voice of Him who once slept in that empty tomb speaks comfortably to us, His brethren, in our heaviness, "Peace be unto you." The voice sounds in our souls; the stone is rolled away from the grave of our sad thoughts; the bitterness of death is past. But, you may say, I see the empty tomb; I believe that the Lord Jesus rose again from the dead; but what is this resurrection to us? why are we to cease to weep over the mystery of death? why are we to lift up our hearts and rejoice in this Easter news of our Lord's rising? Let us consider this together, fellow-sinner and yoke-fellow in bowing to the yoke of death. If Christ only were concerned He would neither have died nor risen. For Himself He needed not to die; for Himself there would have been neither death nor resurrection; such things belonged not to God the Son on His own account. That death was death *for all*; that resurrection for the rising

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again of all that believe, and that spoiling of death for our release from the captivity of death. As we have had one Adam who brought in death, so the blessed Jesus is the second Adam who brought in life. By the power of His resurrection He will draw all men up to Him who believe in Him. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Hereafter there will be a great Easter Day, when the stone will be rolled away from every man's tomb, and when the voice of the archangel at the command of our risen Lord shall call all men from their graves. That one empty sepulchre will cause all sepulchres to be emptied. Wherever the dead have been buried thence will they come; whatever sort of sepulchre they found, whether they lie in calm churchyards, or in the sand beneath the sea, or on fields of battle now waving with corn, or in the clefts of rocks, or in the lonely wilderness, yet the power of Christ's resurrection will stir them and raise them up. He is risen, and by Him we shall be raised; His body was quickened by His own power, and by the same power He will quicken our mortal bodies, for He is the "quickenings Spirit." In those wonderful words, fit for our Easter feast, *He says to us, "I am the resurrection and the*

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life," that is, not only has He risen, but He raises; He is the cause of our resurrection, the Giver of life to the dead. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

Die we must still, die all of us, whatever we are; but death will be changed into life, and angels will welcome in their changed form the bodies that were given to the dust and to the worms. Eternal death, which is the death of death, will not touch them who are Christ's, even as it touched not Christ. Look then to the empty sepulchre, and to Christ who rose therefrom, for your hope. Though you and yours must descend into the grave, yet you have hope, the good and blessed hope of everlasting life, of a joyful resurrection, of an eternal union in heaven through our Lord Jesus Christ. Are then Easter and the Easter truth nothing to you when you think of this? Consider again your own body, and now with new eyes see in these weak members the elements of a new and more glorious form. Though they will still be laid in the house of corruption and dissolved in the chambers of *the earth*, yet you have now the

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hope of ascending with those bodies into the beautiful courts of the Lord, into the house eternal in the heavens, and of being glorified there both in body and soul. Though you may grieve to think that an end is coming to all your present bodily powers, senses, tastes, yet think into how much better, how much more glorious a fashion these frail members may be changed by the mighty working of our risen Lord. Great and unspeakable will be the joy, the gain of the resurrection to all faithful men. Even before that day, if you die as a faithful member of Christ, will not your living soul wing its way, instead of being cast into hell, to paradise? while your mortal body rests awhile in the grave, even before its resurrection, you will in spirit draw near to God and be at peace; and though the very fulness of joy will not be revealed to the children of God till the second coming of Christ, yet in the truest sense "to die is gain."

Or when, in considering the power of Christ's resurrection, you turn from yourself to your kindred, the brethren of your father's house, to child or wife, O see what streams of comfort and holy hope flow into the Christian's soul! Look round now upon your home, on the child prattling

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on the knee, and the silver-haired old man leaning on his staff, look round now upon those whose hearts are bound together as one heart by the cords of love, and if Christ Jesus is faithfully confessed and loved therein, all these will be given to you again. Though you may lay your Lazarus in the grave, and tears fall thickly from your eyes, yet Christian hope in the very time of weeping throws her rainbow across the troublous scene. Christian hope tempers the outbreak of human sorrow ; Christian hope falls like soft and refreshing dew on the weary heart that is ready to break for grief. Christian hope points with a consoling look to that last Easter when all who have fallen asleep in Christ shall rise from their graves, again stand by your side, and pass into that better and brighter home which is home indeed.

Though you will be separated one from the other and grief must come, yet with no hopeless sorrow do Christian kindred part ; with no hopeless sorrow do the words "dust to dust" fall upon the Christian mourner's ear. Sorrow of course it is, to be bereaved even for a season of those we love ; and our Saviour Himself wept at the grave of Lazarus even when He was about to raise him up. *But O how changed the sorrow ! how*

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the grieved spirit can now bound forward to refresh itself with the prospect of the resurrection, when the godly husband shall again greet the godly wife, the godly father delight himself in the godly child, and brethren meet together whom the grave divides.

O unspeakable riches of Christ's love ! unspeakable brightness of our hope in Christ ! O great power of Christ's resurrection if the souls and bodies of faithful men can pass from death to eternal life, from the grave to heaven itself, from mortality to immortality, leaving our tombs empty like that of Christ. "Comfort one another," said the Apostle, "with these words," when He spoke of the resurrection. Yes, they are words sweet and comfortable ; they change the horrible dread of death into a far lesser fear ; and though we cannot, it may be, cast aside all fear through the infirmity of the flesh, yet as the disciples received the truth of Christ risen "with fear and great joy," so while some fear may still linger in our souls, with great joy may all true disciples of Christ contemplate their resurrection.

Here is no continuing city ; here our home is not ; here all things fade ; here we tarry in a *decaying* and dying world ; here from our very

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youth we begin, as it were, to die ; here death is, and sickness, and many griefs ; but there in the promised land, the heavenly Jerusalem, all is bright as with an eternal sun, for “the Lamb is the light thereof ;” there is the light of the perfect day ; there our vile bodies are changed into glorious bodies ; there earthly love, purified of its dross, is perfected in the presence of God ; there the redeemed put on their crowns, and everlasting joy will be upon their heads ; there, with all holy angels, will they offer all praise unto the Lamb, and delight themselves in Him who is the quickening Spirit, worshipping Him in joyful hymns, sweeter than any earthly ear can understand, and giving honour and glory to Him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God blessed for evermore.

Bow then your whole soul before your risen Lord with deepest and most fervent thankfulness. Who should separate you from Christ ? What should dwell in your heart and your heart of hearts but God ? Talk not now of earthly pleasure or pomps or riches, while we are contemplating the resurrection. There is nothing worthy of our care but God only ; nothing worthy of pursuit but that promised home, where of the faithful followers of Christ it is *written*, that God “shall wipe all

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tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.

Yet of the unfaithful, of the unholy, what must we say? Surely to them this Easter news is but darker tidings than those of death, except they instantly repent. Of the resurrection to damnation, who dare think without horror and great fear? O thou who hast followed me through these lines, serve this risen and most gracious Lord ! serve Him with all your heart, who has done such great things for the sons of men ! serve Him with all your soul and strength, that thou mayest be numbered amongst the saints in glory everlasting, through Him, your Saviour. Amen, Amen.

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DEVOTION.

BLESSED Jesus, who didst once bow Thyself to death and overcome death, we draw near unto Thee this day to worship Thee and to bless Thee, to give Thee all thanks and praise for Thy great victory over hell. To Thee, the Conqueror of death, the Captain of our salvation, who didst lay down Thy life and take it again out of the enemy's hand, we draw near, that we may be conquerors through Thee who hast loved us. We confess Thee, O Lord, to be the Giver of victory, the Author of salvation to all them that believe, the Author and Finisher of our faith, our great High-Priest, our Passover sacrificed for us, the Resurrection and the Life.

O Thou, who didst once pass through the pains of death, be with us, good Lord, with Thy Spirit in our hour of death; for Thou knowest our human fears and our dread of death, and wilt have compassion upon us in our need. O Thou, who didst once lay Thy most holy body in the grave, and didst there rest from the work of redemption finished upon the cross, cause our bodies to rest in peace, and suffer us not to die till we have served Thee acceptably, and have finished to the uttermost of our power our appointed work.

O Thou, whose soul did pass into paradise from the cross, and *did there tarry* among the spirits of Thy

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saints, send Thy holy angels to carry our souls when we die into Abraham's bosom, that we may tarry in that joyful place with the faithful who have gone hence, till Thou dost reveal Thy more perfect joy.

O Thou, who didst raise Thy body from the grave by the power of Thy Godhead, raise up our mortal bodies at the last day, and glorify them. When Thou dost raise us up, change our vile bodies, that they may be like unto Thy glorious body. Grant that that which is sown in corruption may be raised in incorruption, that which is sown in dishonour may be raised in glory, that which is sown in weakness may be raised in power, that which is sown a natural body may be raised a spiritual body, the earthy being transformed into the heavenly, the corruptible putting on incorruption, and the mortal immortality. O grant us, dear Lord, this change! O grant us to be partakers of Thy resurrection! O quicken our affections towards Thee, our faith in Thee, our love of Thee and of our brethren, that we may have a good hope of attaining Thy mercy, of being forgiven our trespasses, of being raised up to Thy kingdom of heaven.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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Death.

ONE Easter Monday I was sitting in my room, gazing at the pictures which adorned the walls ; and as my eye glanced along from one to the other, it rested at last upon one painted with some cleverness, and designed to represent "Time," after the style of the allegorical pictures of the last age. The figure was that of an old man, with a scythe in his hand, and an hourglass by his side ; and the painter had contrived to give the expression of haste to his countenance with much success. I sat for some time half idly, half thoughtfully admiring the artist's skill. As I continued gazing, it seemed to me that the figure began to move ; at first I thought that some draught stirred the canvass, but the door was shut, and it was, moreover, a calm spring day. *The motion of the figure soon became more decided*

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and distinct ; the old man's eye began to sparkle with the fire of life, and to look restlessly around ; his hand seemed to clutch his scythe in a tighter grasp, and his lips to be making an attempt to speak. Surprised with the strangeness of the scene, I sate in mute astonishment, unable to take my eyes off the wondrous picture. But my wonder increased, when the old man, with his scythe in hand, advanced into the room, and then motioning to me with his hand to follow him, told me that we must not idle, for that " much grass was ripe."

I seemed compelled to follow him ; and as we passed hurriedly out of the room, I observed that along the blade of his scythe was written in black letters, the word DEATH. When I reflected on the old man's words, the text came into my mind, " The days of man are but as grass." " Stop," I cried, " what work have you to do ? where is your field, and where your grass ?"

" I cannot stop," he answered, " for when I stop, I die myself ; the world is my field," he continued in a stern and excited tone, " and men are the grass."

I sunk into silence, and we moved on like the *wind*. I could not but notice as we sped

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on, that we were quite unseen. First we passed by the outskirts of a great city, and we saw many funerals threading their way in one direction or another to the various churchyards. How many hearts, I thought within myself, are well nigh bursting with grief in those melancholy groups of mourners. In one case there was a man holding a little boy by his hand, while two other children were by some friend led behind him—he, I conjectured, wifeless, and those children motherless. Just on such a morning as this, did the blessed Jesus meet the funeral of the widow's only son, coming out of Nain, but none to-day to stop them that carry this wife and mother to her burial!

“Onward, onward!” cried the old man, as I was inclined to pause and watch the sad trains passing to the open graves. “That grass,” he said, pointing to the coffins, “*is* cut.”

Presently we reached a well-built street of houses of moderate size. Passing through the door of one of the largest of the set, we saw a doctor coming down the stairs, with a strong expression of unaffected distress marked upon his face; two maid-servants were anxiously waiting for him at the bottom of the stairs, to *hear what tidings* he could bring from above.

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“How’s dear master, Sir; how’s he now?” eagerly asked the elder of the two.

“Worse, very much worse,” the doctor replied, and a sad shake of the head said more to them than many words, as he gently stole out of the house. The younger maid sobbed aloud, and one would have thought the doctor had spoken of a father and not a master, though indeed a godly master is as a father to all that dwell under his roof.

“Hush, hush! Jenny; don’t you give way so, girl; come bear up, if it’s only for poor Missis’ sake.”

As the girl made a strong effort to check herself at this remark, we passed into the sick man’s room. He was evidently sinking fast; his wife was kneeling by his bedside, tenderly holding his pale clammy hand, and sometimes pressing it to her lips; a clergyman was standing at the foot of the bed, watching with alarm the change that had passed over his face. He had gone through a violent fever; the fever had left him, but there was no strength to rally. The history of the fever reveals the history of the man. He had been bred up as a surgeon, and after practising but a few years, an elder brother died leaving *him* ample means. His friends expected him to

retire, as a matter of course, and to enjoy life in a higher sphere. Their expectation was unfulfilled. He did what their worldly spirits could not understand, and he was criticised as "strange and odd," with some such phrase tacked on as, "there's no accounting for tastes." The surgeon remained a surgeon still, and in the same house. One thing indeed he altered; he gave up his richer patients, and devoted himself exclusively to the poor, giving them his services "without money and without price." Before his fortune came, God had touched his heart; he lived for a life to come; he saw in the poor, who could not recompense him, the friends of Christ; his profession became to him a religious office; and thus viewing it as a providential calling, a sphere of Christian service allotted him by God, he only welcomed his increased fortune as a means of helping him more largely to aid others both with his skill and alms. In attending in this spirit a wretched family in one of the closest parts of the city, he had caught a fever, and a delicate constitution was exhausted when the fever ceased.

"Pray, pray!" he faintly exclaimed as we entered; the clergyman instantly knelt down and poured forth a prayer with a broken and a faltering voice, while the wife followed him in

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spirit with visible intensity. I saw that the sick man's lips moved with theirs. As they prayed, the old man to my horror raised his scythe, and with one slight blow, invisible to all but me, the little stalk of the flower of grass was cut, and the wife fell to the ground a widow.

We now hurried on to a village a few miles from the town ; on our road we met carts going into market, and farmers jogging along the lanes, and country folks carrying their baskets full of butter and eggs, and nice fresh vegetables, for the town. The sun shone brightly, the birds sang, the green banks on either side of the road smelt quite sweet with the wild flowers, the air itself was fresh and fragrant, and all things seemed to revel in the joyfulness of life. Country sounds met the ear on every side. Oh, thought I within myself, what sorrows lie within the world, while all things that meet the pilgrim's eye are bright and glad ! what a contrast is this bright refreshing scene to the scene of sorrow which I have just witnessed, and how many like sorrows are at this very time filling a thousand other rooms !

While I was giving way to this train of thought on our flight, we came to a green winding lane leading up to an old village church. At the bottom

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of the lane was a neat white cottage, standing in a trim garden, and about half way up we saw an old man resting on the mossy bank, with a girl about twelve years old kneeling by his side. On approaching the old man, I was struck by the serene beauty of his countenance. A faintness had come over him, and the child had made him rest on the bank; she had taken his broad-brimmed hat from his head, in the hope that the air would refresh him; his long silver hair was gently stirred by the wind; and it was a touching sight to see the child, with her rough bonnet thrown back, and her hair hanging over her face, kneeling at his feet chafing his wrinkled hands, and looking anxiously into his face.

“Are you better, dear grandfather?” asked the girl eagerly.

The old man with a sad smile shook his head. [He observed that a large prayer-book, wrapped in a clean white handkerchief had been laid on a tuft of wild flowers, on the bank. He was evidently on his way to church for the Easter Monday service. His grandchild, seeing a strange trembling and paleness come over him, looked round anxiously for help; but no one was near: she then began to be greatly frightened and to cry: she continued tremulously to chafe his withered hand, and not

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knowing what else to do, she hurried to a little spring opposite to her, to fetch some water in her hand to moisten the old man's mouth, and to sprinkle over his temples. All was in vain ; he continued faint and speechless ; now and then he cast a very kind and earnest look on the child, as though he wished to speak. The child cried bitterly. " O dearest, dearest grandfather, speak one word to your own Bessy." The old man's parched lips slightly moved, but though he shaped the words, the voice was wanting ; at last, as if with an effort, he raised his right hand, and letting it fall gently on the head of the child kneeling at his feet, he faintly muttered words she could just catch by bending forward and listening as it were with her soul as well as ear, " God bless you, my child !" and then as his head fell back on the mossy bank, my guide raised his scythe—the old man was asleep.

I was then hurried off, and though I turned round to gaze on the poor child as she leaped from her knees to catch her grandfather's falling head ; a turn of the lane hid the scene of death and sorrow from my eyes, though the echo of a heart-rending cry of grief was wafted to my ears.

We soon reached another village a few miles *further* on ; we entered a small house in the

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middle of the long straggling street, the one street of the place.

"Give me the child, Giles; let me have my turn," said an old woman to a middle-aged labourer, who was holding a sick child in his arms.

"No, mother, no; I can't, I can't let the child go out of my arms while life's in it."

"Why, Giles, you've not had a wink of sleep these three nights. Do go and lie down a bit. I'll call you, that I will, if the child gets worse. You need'nt take your clothes off, but just lie down as you are; it'll do you good."

"The child's worse, mother; there's no disguising it; I see it plain as day. O God," he exclaimed, "O God, give me strength for this trial!"

"Well, Giles," said his mother with solemn warmth, "that He will. Since your dear wife's death you have sought Him, I do believe, most earnestly, and He will not leave you now."

"No, mother, I know He won't; but it's hard to bear," and the poor man wept like a child. He was a hale, lusty, fresh-looking man, of a very manly sort; and yet it was beautiful to see how gently and tenderly he handled the little sick girl; *and as its little white cheek rested on his*

brawny arm, and his coarse ruddy face was bent over it, the whole sight afforded an affecting instance of outward roughness softened by love into something like womanly gentleness.

“O if it could but speak, mother,” the man exclaimed; “if I could but know what it felt!”

“The Lord who suffered upon the cross, Giles, knows all its sufferings. Had’nt we better offer another prayer now? for then God will help us with His Spirit, and praying always refreshes one, does’nt it?”

“Yes, it does indeed; kneel down, mother; I can’t kneel, for I shall disturb the dear child; but my heart, please God, will be with you. That’s a good mother. I’m ready.”

As the old woman knelt down there was a slight tap at the door, and then, as the latch was raised, the clergyman entered; seeing what they were about to do, he motioned the old woman not to rise from her knees. He instantly knelt down and prayed for this lamb of his flock, for the little one of Christ. The father sobbed aloud. Suddenly the infant gave a piercing cry. “Good God!” exclaimed the poor father, “mother, mother, the child’s a dying!” The old man raised his scythe.—

“O not the little one!” I cried in an agony of

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rief, as I snatched at his arm to stop the blow ;
my hand seemed only to strike the air, and the
tender blade of grass, was cut
down in her father's arms.

Shocked at the sight, I determined to break
away if possible from the old man, and with a
great effort I succeeded. With gloomy thoughts
wended my way to the churchyard, and seating
myself on the ledge of an old tomb, I gave myself
up to many bitter musings on the mystery of
Time and Death. After I had sat for some time
riddled in thought, I heard in the direction of the
church-gate, the rustling as of many feet. On
looking up I found that a funeral had just reached
the gate, and was pausing while an aged clergy-
man advanced to meet it. Then broke from his
lips words that startled me, as though I had never
heard them before. " I am the resurrection and
the life, saith the Lord : he that believeth in
Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live :
and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall
never die." I seemed quite to gasp for breath
at these words, spoken with pious fervour and
yet without emotion, struck my ear. I seemed
to understand them for the first time, to hear
them with new ears, and to relish them with
a new heart. As the procession moved slowly

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on to the porch, I kept pondering on them with a sort of amazed joy. I followed the mourners into the church. The Psalms rather recalled my thoughts of death and broke the new current of my thoughts, though I felt their fitness as impressing upon the living the shortness of life and the certainty of death. I had been meditating so bitterly of death, that at that moment they rather deepened my gloom; but when the clergyman with great feeling read the sublime chapter of St. Paul touching the resurrection, my whole frame thrilled with strange sensations of awe and hope and joy. The world seemed to swim before my eyes as a poor fading dream; a new thirst for this promised immortality seized me; worldly things melted into utter insignificance before the prospect which the Apostle, speaking by the Spirit, opened out to my kindling soul; and when the clergyman, himself warmed with the increasing sublimity of the triumphant words, exclaimed, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" unconscious of all around me I threw myself on the ground, and wept in an ecstasy of awakened hope.

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Life.

AGAIN the funeral was on its road. The corpse was carried out of the church where the efforts of the mourners had been strengthened by the words of St. Paul, for the last bitter act of the giving of dust to dust. Again my soul was cheered by other words of the Spirit that took away the bitterness of death, and repented it as gain to die, as gain to give our dust to dust, as gain to be taken from our accustomed place on earth, as gain to leave earthly home and kindred, supposing that our life has been a holy and blessed Christian life, ending with a holy and Christian death. My spirit was stirred within me when after the earth, thrice cast, had sounded on the coffin, the Service supplied the mourner with instant consolation; "I heard a voice from heaven," was the consoling sentence touchingly and solemnly delivered, "saying unto me,

Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord : even so saith the Spirit ; for they rest from their labours." The remainder of the Service spoke in like strains of hope ; and while my own heart was inexpressibly lightened by the forcible and feeling assertion of the truth of the resurrection, and of our hope in Christ, I could not but feel how much of divine consolation was poured into the souls of that sad group of mourners, standing round the grave of their friend almost overcome with grief.

The procession soon passed on ; a little lingering there was at the grave ; a little looking in, ere the earth was cast over the coffin ; a little trembling pause as the tearful eyes gazed on that which might not be disturbed till the day of resurrection, and then the mourners moved towards home. Then the grave-digger shovelled the earth into the grave, and I was left alone.

Again seating myself on the old tomb, my mind now wandered from the former subject of death to that of life, of resurrection to eternal life. The scenes that I had so lately witnessed, and that had filled me with profound melancholy, now stood before me in a very different light. The *grief* of the surgeon's widow, of the old man's

grand-daughter, of the father of the little child, now reminded me of the text, "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy;" and I pictured to myself the rapture, the transport of all those afflicted ones, when the wife should be restored again to her husband, the little girl stand at the side of the silver-haired old man, and the father join his little one, never to be parted any more. "O death!" I said to myself, "where is thy sting!" a sting indeed it has even yet, but it is a broken, blunted sting; the sharpest of its pangs is done away by Him who has given us hope, and now we can lay husband or child or father in the grave with a good hope of beholding them in the land of life, even of eternal life, by the power of His resurrection who is a "quickenings Spirit." The flesh is as grass, and the scythe of death in the hand of Time cuts us down, but as the flower of grass so shall we rise again; the lanes, the fields, the gardens that brighten our earthly homes, all shew us the resurrection of the dead; men will have their spring, when the dead seed of their mortal bodies shall be quickened by the voice of God. The words of the Apostle that I had so lately heard in church rose afresh to my mind as I gazed on the daisies *that speckled* the turf of the church-

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yard with their little milk-white stars. "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body."

Thus the scythe of death seemed to inflict but a friendly wound, letting out the soul of the faithful from its walls of flesh to fly into the blessed fields of paradise, amongst the departed spirits of the just, and also releasing the body from all pain and torment and woe, from hunger and thirst, from cold and weariness, from weakness and disease, to lie in peace till it should be re-united to the soul in the glorious kingdom of our Lord.

While such reflections were passing in my mind, the bells of the church struck up, and I found that, according to the Prayer-book, Easter joy was prolonged in this place beyond Easter Sunday. Several of the parishioners were wending their way to the House of Prayer. I entered with the rest, and with no little thankfulness I took my seat with the little village flock, that had left their homes to pray to their risen Lord. *The same aged clergyman performed the service,*

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and as though the recent funeral had affected him, there seemed a sort of melting earnestness about him, as he lifted up his voice in prayer, and read the Lessons so well fitted for the day, that helped to give unusual impressiveness to the service. My own mind also was in a state to feel his earnestness, and hence his sermon, which at other times might have struck me but little, found soft ground in my heart to fall upon. After describing the joy and wonder of the disciples who "believed not for joy," as we are told in the Gospel of the day, he proceeded, as far as I can recollect, in some such strain as this:—

"Doubtless in our case, too, there will be wonder; doubtless in our case there will be awe; no man can think seriously of his own resurrection, or that of his nearest friends, without awe. What! is it possible to look on the dead without wonder and strange thoughts, though we see the very form and features that we have known so long? And can it be possible to see that form rise again, and life come back, and the turf crack on either side to let the quickened body rise to meet the Lord in the air? can it be possible to see such a sight without some dread and some awe stealing over our souls? If death is awful, though it is so common amongst

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us, and if we can never get used to that mystery so often revealed to us in part, we may be sure that the rising of the dead will be awful. O my brethren, if we consider all those whom of late years we have laid in their graves, could we receive them back this day, and not feel any awe? Would there not rather be a great fluttering at our heart, and almost a hiding of our faces? Should we not seek to embolden ourselves for the sight, by falling on our knees in prayer?

“But though awe will, we may believe, mix itself with the joy of regaining our departed friends, think, my little flock, of the greatness of that joy. Death has separated very friends; death has wielded his spear and stricken to the ground many with whom we loved to dwell, who were the lights of our house, the partners of our joys and of our griefs, our guides and counsellors, our friends and comforters, the loved ones, on whom was bestowed the fulness of our love. Death has thrown a wide gulf betwixt us and them; and though we feel after them in spirit, and think of them as we believe them to be now, and remember them as they were, yet we see them not face to face; while we tarry here, we cannot have them at our side; we are severed *for a time*; we go on our way without them;

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we cannot run to them to tell them of our joys ; we cannot hasten to pour our sorrows into their ears ; death has put a thick veil between us ; death has carried them out of our sight. But yet, thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ, death is not altogether powerful ; that strong man armed has met a stronger than he. From death we have passed to life ; there is life as well as death, life after death, a glorious life, to which death is but the passage and the door ; and though, as I have said, to see the dead alive, to see graves opened, to see the bodies of the friends that sleep, may be awful to the heart of man, yet how much will the joy exceed the awe ! how much will the rapture of entering upon eternal life with them exceed that first tremor of soul when we first gaze at them again ! Most blessed day of the resurrection ! Most blessed hope of Christian men ! Most blessed Saviour, who by Thine own death and Thy taking again of life, hast opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and given us the promise of life ! How can poor human thought compass the things that are revealed, or human words express even such thoughts as come rushing into the soul ! From this dying world lift up your souls, and gaze by faith into the land of life. From

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this sinful world lift up your souls, and by faith discern the holy city where nothing that defileth, nothing that is impure, will be able to touch the redeemed. From this sorrowful world see afar off the land of joy where true joys are to be found, the flowers of an everlasting spring, the pleasures that are at God's right hand for evermore. From this world of graves turn yourselves and see the land where none die, the garden wherein there is no tomb. We have hope of reaching that land of life ; we are called to it by Christ Himself ; He Himself invites us, presses us, beseeches us to enter in ; He Himself desires us to take of the water of life freely ; glorious visions open upon the souls of them that believe, and we know not how soon the hope may become possession, and the visions of bliss be exchanged for the glorious reality. In a little while the door may open, and we may be carried hence. Life hangs by a little thread ; it is as grass and the flower of grass, soon cut down. We cannot tell who may be called first ; the babe may go before the old man, or the man who is in his prime may be the first. We have even this day laid one beloved one of the flock in his grave, one, I do believe, well-prepared, *one* whose soul had the true thirst for immor-

talities, one who all his life long sought to do Christ's will, and was an humble spirit walking wisely in the ways of Christ. Ripe for the sickle has he been cut down, and of him we have a good hope. He 'is not dead but sleepeth.' If we live as closely with God as he, we shall go to him through the mercies of our Redeemer, though he cannot come back to us.

"O my brethren, hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ! While we think of one who has ended his battle, let the thought of his finished warfare rouse us to contend more earnestly for the faith; the battle is but for a time, the victory is for ever. Press on, soldiers of Christ! quit yourselves like men; press on, that ye may be partakers of the resurrection of Christ, and of the life which Christ has purchased by His own most precious blood. What if we were to undo the work of Christ's love, and to make the cross of Christ of none effect, and to refuse the salvation which He has wrought! And yet we know that there is a resurrection to eternal death as well as a resurrection to eternal life; we know that there is a resurrection to damnation, the portion of unrepenting sinners, the eternal portion of the worldly, the lovers of pleasure, the

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lustful, the covetous, the drunken, the proud. Fly from the way that leadeth to that resurrection, turn away your eyes in great fear and dread from those sins which are denials of Christ, which turn away Christ from us, and make a most merciful Saviour a most wrathful and angry Judge. Set your affections on things above, purify yourselves even as your Lord is pure, rise from dead works to serve the living God, lead a risen life as the disciples of the risen Christ. Be in the world but not of it, die to the world, die to sin while you live, and then when you die you shall rise again with your bodies and live with Him, who is the atonement for our sins, in the kingdom of everlasting life. Even so may it be; even so, O Saviour, grant that it may be; even so, O Holy Ghost, without whom we cannot think or do any thing that is good, work with us and in us that we may please God."

No sooner had the clergyman ended his sermon in some such words as these, than to my surprise the whole church seemed to swim before my eyes. I could see nothing distinctly for a time, and at last as my sight returned I looked up, and there before me was the picture with the old man "Time" with his hurried look, his scythe in his hand, and his hour-glass at his side

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The church too had turned into my own room. The truth is, that I had fallen asleep while I was looking at the picture, and as I had been just reading the Tract for Easter Sunday, my dream had woven together the picture and the subject of the Tract ; for I found that the first part of my dream had illustrated the first part of the Tract which speaks of *death* and the grave, while the last part, like the last part of the Tract, spoke of *life* and the resurrection. When I had recovered myself, the bells of my own church sounded across the valley, and I rose to go to a real church, to join in a real Easter service, and my dream gave me many subjects for serious thought to prepare me for that service as I walked across the fields.

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COLLECT.

ALMIGHTY God, who through thy only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; we humbly beseech Thee, that, as by Thy special grace preventing us Thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by Thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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Living faith in the Resurrection.

How must the Apostles' understandings have been enlarged and enlightened, how must their faith have been quickened and confirmed, when the Lord Jesus stood among them in His risen body on the evening of the very day of His resurrection, the first Easter day! As we read in the Gospel, "He came and stood in the midst and said unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said He shewed them His hands and His side." To hear His voice again and to see those five most sacred wounds was indeed a confirmation of His true and real manhood, in body as well as soul, and also a great revelation of His eternal Godhead. His own ends were visibly accomplished, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down and I have *power to take it again.*" But what hap-

pened on the eighth day after, as on this very Sunday, was perhaps still more remarkable.

On the occasion of His first appearance, the Apostle St. Thomas was absent, and for the more confirmation of our faith, He suffered him to be doubtful of the truth of His resurrection, even to refuse altogether to believe it, unless it could be proved to him by sight and by touch. And so eight days after, on the first day of the week, Jesus stood once more in the midst of His disciples. As before, His very coming was a miracle. "He came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither Thy finger and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing." That which He offered to St. Thomas to touch and to handle, was the real body of man, with flesh and bones. But the very sight of that risen Body convinced the Apostle of unbelief; through the wounds of the manhood he discerned the Son of God, and he worshipped Him of whom he had before doubted; "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God."

The sight of our Lord after His resurrection, convinced St. Thomas that He is perfect God as

well as perfect man : and without doubt it is recorded for our instruction, that our faith may be directed to gain its full profit from this glorious and most joyful mystery. But we shall do very wrong if we rest satisfied with forming in our understandings bare notions of these great truths without going on to apply them to our practice ; we run a great risk, or rather we are utterly undone, if we stop at mere speculation. We live by faith, but barren speculation is not faith ; on the contrary, it is the most hardening and benumbing thing in the world to the souls of those who indulge in it. Faith is a practical principle ; it is not a mere assent of the understanding ; it is a consent of the will also, and it devotes the affections to holiness : as it is written, “ with the heart man believeth unto righteousness ;” with the understanding heart, not with the reason ; not unto knowledge, but unto righteousness. Assent to divine truths is no true living faith, unless it influence also the will and affections ; and because we cannot see the will and affections, we can only know that it does so by our actions. The actions of a holy life are the only safe proofs of a lively faith.

In his Epistle St. James supplies some forcible illustrations of this truth ; which indeed seem to be suggested in part by words of our

Lord Himself in the Gospels. A dead faith may be likened to a dry tree which has no sap. During the winter it is like other trees in appearance, but when spring comes, and the other trees put forth leaves, and open their bright flowers under the warm sun and the gentle showers, the dead tree shews that it wants the sap of life, that it is but a dry stock, for it has no green leaf, no flower upon it. And so when autumn comes, and the fruits are gathered in, it is found barren, and condemned to be cut down and burnt. So a dead faith is to all appearance the same with a living faith, till the time of bringing forth its fruits, and then it is found to be barren and dead, because it lacks the vital sap of charity. It is union with love which gives its life to faith : faith working by love is a living faith. We know a body to be alive by its moving, by its breathing, by its pulses, and by its performing other natural functions. When it ceases to move, when we are certain that its breathing, and its circulation, and the like, are stopped, we are sure that the body is dead : just so when a man professes to have faith, but brings forth no good works, we must needs fear that his faith is separated from charity, that it has lost its principle of life, that it is no longer a living but a dead faith. On the con-

trary, when we see a holy life, it is a reason, and the best reason, for believing that faith is living. We ought never, therefore, to attempt to separate, even in thought, the act of faith from the act of love, which is the life of faith. Still less can we really have faith without its working by love. If it do not, the same will bring forth contrary fruits, like a fountain bringing forth at the same place both salt water and fresh. To apply a comparison which the Apostle himself suggests, it is as though a man should profess to bear good will to another, and then by his actions should belie and contradict the kind intentions he professed to have. We all know how angry we should feel at such a person in common life, and very justly so: but alas! does not the all-seeing eye of God behold contradictions between our professions of faith and our lives, very like this hypocritical conduct?

We are, it is to be feared, at this day very much in danger of forgetting that faith is a practical principle, and not a mere knowledge of divine truths; that there is a work before us which we are to accomplish, a warfare in which we are to be victorious, by faith. This is the great practical lesson of the Epistle for this Sunday; “*Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world,*

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even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." (1 St. John v. 4, 5.) The world is the arena on which we have to fight the good fight of faith; we find in it the open enemies of our souls, and the indifferent, heartless, mocking, spectators of our conflict. God permits it to be in the state in which it is, for the trial of our faith. Our trials indeed are not like those of the first Christians; the world beset them not only with taunts, and allurements, but with savage threats and cruel persecutions; they "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment." Oftentimes, they were called to resist unto blood, striving against sin. When they "confessed that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh," they put their life into their hand. When they were brought to judgment before the heathen magistrate, they might have saved their lives at any moment by repeating a few little words, and putting a few grains of incense upon the altar which stood ready by their side. But let the records of the Church testify how many refused to deny Christ; how they withstood every cruelty the malice of the world could invent, and at last laid down their lives for Christ. *Thus they conquered the world by faith.*

St. Paul's account of his own sufferings for the

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faith, if we only read the Bible with attention, would give us a very clear notion of the deadly struggle in which the early Christians wrestled with the powers of this world, and overcame them by faith, and we should understand the full meaning of St. John when he says, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world."

Neither are the trials which assail our faith through our intellect and our affections in some respects to be compared in intensity with those which beset them. For the sake of Christ, they had to give up home, and home pleasures, ease and competence, honours and station; the respect and society of friends, and the love of relations, even of father or mother, husband or wife, child or brother. "A man's foes" were they "of his own household." Then again, they did not inherit the faith, they were not sanctified and taught by the Gospel from the very womb, as we are. Their previous education and ideas opened their minds to all kinds of monstrous innovations against the faith. The cross of Christ was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness."

In all these respects our trials, thanks be to God, are not like those of the first Christians; and yet we too are *engaged* in a conflict for life and

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death with the self-same enemy—the world ;—and we must overcome it, by the very same weapon,—by faith,—which is as contemptible in the eyes of our foe, as the sling and stone of holy David were to the giant Goliath, in his armour of brass. And there is a special blessing attached to our faith. When our Lord as on this day revealed Himself to His doubting Apostle St. Thomas, He said, “Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed ; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” (St. John xx. 29.) We are to overcome the world, and obtain this blessing, not having seen Him, but believing.

Every one, who is taking any pains at all to act up to the vow he made at his baptism, and to lead the life of one who has died with Christ unto sin once, and is risen again to holiness, must be conscious that he has around him men and women, holding opinions and indulging in practices, which are against the will of God, and which it is his duty to renounce and oppose. This is the world against which every one of us has to fight. Whatever there is in the society in which we live, or in companies into which we may chance to fall, which tempts us to break the *known* laws of God, for instance when persons

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mong whom we happen to be talk freely about the
ults of other people, or use unchaste language, or
st in an unseemly manner, or take God's holy
lame in vain, or speak evil of His Church,—this
the world to us, and we must resist it by
ith. We ought to withdraw even from the hear-
ing of such conversation, or if our remonstrances
re likely to be of any avail, to say boldly how
rong such language is ; at all events, if as
erhaps is but too probable, we are ourselves
empted to join in such talk, we must forbear,
nd set a watch before our lips, by a short prayer
our hearts that God would keep us from
inning in word against Him. The world, in-
eed, which surrounds us, assails us with temp-
ations to more grievous sins than those just
entioned ; but we must withstand them in the
ame way, we must “ endure, as seeing Him who
invisible,” seeing Him, that is, by faith. We
must imitate Joseph when his master's wicked
rife tempted him to fleshly sin, for he thought
f the presence of God and of His goodness
owards him, and said, “ How can I do this
reat wickedness and sin against God ;” and
ed at once from the temptation. In the
ame way, to remember that the all-seeing eye of
ur good God is upon us, and to fly instantly,
our only safety when we are tempted through

the flesh, and so also against the temptations of the "poms and vanities of this wicked world." Our best protection is beforehand to live habitually as in the presence of God, and when we are tempted, to recollect where we are. By repeated acts of the mind we must beget in ourselves an abiding sense of this most certain, most awful, and yet most comforting truth, that the great God is indeed "about our path, and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways." For this end it is good to lift up our hearts to Him by short prayers, and acts of faith and love and contrition, many times during the day; when we awake and rise from our beds in the morning, when we lie down to sleep, and when awake at night, when we go out and come in, in the midst of our work and of our recreations, when we are walking and at our meals; and so assure ourselves, make ourselves conscious, that God is thus close to us. Especially when we are actually tempted to sin, we ought immediately to pray to God for help, in such words as these, "O God, make speed to save me; O Lord, make haste to help me." And when unhappily any one has fallen into sin, he should instantly turn to His Father who is in heaven, and say from the bottom of his heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner; Lord, heal my soul, for the sake of Thy dear Son,

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and give me strength that I may never again offend Thee, who art so good to me," or the like. Though we may sometimes fall, yet we are sure to overcome the world in the end, by thus holding habitual communion with the unseen but present God, ever seeking Him with our hearts by faith, through the merits and mediation of His Son our Lord.

We are not bidden to stand afar off from the presence of God, as the Israelites were at Mount Sinai. Our Lord has opened for us a door of access, through which we may "come boldly unto the throne of grace." (Heb. iv. 16.) We approach in and through Him as members of His mystical Body, the holy Church. By the mystery of His holy Incarnation, to which the Church points in the Epistle for this Sunday, He has united Christians to Himself in a most intimate personal relation. This they are to realize by faith, to feel it deeply and truly as a real fact; they are to live as if they saw Him before their bodily eyes, and by this faith they will overcome the world. Let any one picture to his mind's eye the Divine Person of our Lord, as He is shewn to us in the Gospels, and think with himself whether he could wilfully sin, if the searching eye of the Lord Jesus, at once so severe *and so loving*, were fixed upon him; or let him

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recal the picture which the Church set before our eyes on Good Friday, and think that a sorrowful voice came from those parched lips, and warned him not to add another wound to that heavy burden of pain and shame ; and then let him ask himself whether he could disobey that voice to gain the little pleasure or profit with which the world now tempts him. And yet to see our Lord with the bodily eyes would give a very faint idea of the awful nearness to our souls in which He is now standing, though unseen. And Scripture tells us that for Christians to sin wilfully is nothing less than to pierce afresh His mangled body, and to “ put Him to an open shame.” Alas ! we do not really believe what we profess to believe when we say the Creed. If we did, we could not fall into sin, so often, so carelessly, so wilfully as we do ; men sin, in fact, through an evil heart of unbelief. As a holy life is faith in act, so all sin is unbelief in act. Sin therefore must be conquered by faith, and there is no exercise of faith so effectual, none which withdraws the soul so far from the influence of the world, as devout and affectionate meditation upon the Divine Person, the Life and Passion of our Lord.

And as this practice is profitable to deaden *the* senses, and to close the door of the heart

ainst the allurements of the world ; so also
 ristians may gain by it a deep inward conscious-
 ss, that the Lord Jesus is their Friend and
 aide in all the troubles and perplexities of this
 e. Most persons at some time or other are in
 al perplexity as to how they ought to act ; and
 t in such a case, let any one ask himself these
 o questions : “ What would my Saviour have
 e to do ? ” “ What would He do Himself if
 e were in my place ? ” And, if he has really
 deavoured to enter into the spirit of our Savi-
 r’s life, as it is set forth for our imitation in the
 ospels, it is certain that he would always hear
 still small voice in the depth of his conscience
 lling him what to do. And no one can have
 ed long in the world without feeling how
 uch he needs such a guide. We are like men
 alking by night along a narrow path with a
 ecipice on the one side and on the other. And
 e world conjures up the shadowy forms of
 real goods, which flit round us through the
 oom, or sounds in our ears its threats, or its
 utteries, to drive or to seduce us from the way
 at leadeth unto life. But our blessed Lord’s
 otless pattern of a holy life, is as it were a
 mp placed in our hands to shew us the solid
 ound whereon to plant our next step, how to
 rform, *that is, the one duty which lies next*

before us. To perform well the actions of our daily life, trusting to His arm to support us, and taking Him for our pattern, is indeed to walk by faith.

The life of a Christian, which is sometimes represented to us as a journey, is also compared, and more frequently, to a warfare. Our Lord is the Captain of our salvation; we are soldiers under Him, we were signed with the cross at our baptism to be His faithful soldiers unto our life's end. We are fighting under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil; we are wearing the armour which He has given us, the graces, that is, which He has infused into our souls; and our active, insidious enemy, the world, is ever contriving how to steal them from us, especially the great shield of faith. It does not indeed persecute us, as it did the first Christians, to make them deny Christ. No; the world has flowed into the Church; it has learnt to repeat by rote the articles of the faith; its children are familiar with these watchwords of the Christian host, and so pass unobserved among its ranks. But though the world does not, for the most part, contradict in words what we believe, it is only a more dangerous, because a more subtle enemy, for it endeavours to make of faith a mere notion *of the understanding*; it disparages, or rather it *altogether* derides it, as a principle of action.

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When the question is of action, its favourite maxim is, "seeing is believing;" it adopts incredulity as the rule of life; men of the world are ever saying "we do not see this or that," we do not see how prayers, and fasting, and almsgiving, can do good, we do not see at the altar anything but common bread and wine. They think, and insinuate, if they do not say so expressly, that prayer is an indolence, and fasting unsocial, and almsgiving a wrong to society, and the blessed sacrament a mere empty figure. And when simple childlike men hear the word of Christ and forthwith do it, they call them irrational and absurd, and unfit to live in this world; they express as much scorn and indignation towards those who are merely obeying the precepts and counsels of our Lord in the Gospel, as if they were guilty of some great crime. But the soldiers of Christ overcome the world by faith. In spite of all that it can say or do, they walk by faith, not by sight; they take our Lord at His word; they venture something now to gain His promises hereafter; seek Him where He is to be found, in the sacraments of His Church; they fast, and pray, and give alms, as He bids them; they shrink from all that offends Him; they live with their eyes ever fixed upon Him, both God and *Man in one Person*; they find comfort, and

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strength, and refreshment, in the true knowledge of Him ; they grow daily in the reverent love of Him ; having not seen they love Him, in whom though now they see Him not, yet believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory ; receiving the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. (1 Pet. i. 8, 9.) He is to them a living friend, and because He lives they live also ; He has risen again, and they are risen with Him. Their new life is as much superior to the dumb, grovelling, sordid life, which the men of this world live by choice, as the bright sunshine, and the fresh air, are superior to the gloom and darkness, the cold and damps of the grave. And though one day they will have themselves to enter into its silent chamber, and death will have power over their bodies for a little while, yet in them will be fulfilled "the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

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The Good Shepherd.

It is observable that the types and images which God has employed in Holy Scripture in order to teach us heavenly truths, are very often, perhaps almost always, taken from *country* occupations. In this respect country people have a decided advantage over others who are born and brought up in cities, towards understanding the force and meaning of God's Word. The parables of our Lord especially come home to their minds. Just as children are taught most easily by the help of pictures, so the continual daily occupations of country life are used in almost every page of Scripture to set before us spiritual things. Ploughing, and sowing seed, reaping the crops, thrashing and winnowing the corn, and storing it in the barn, tending flocks, shearing sheep, the growth of the grass and all plants ; these and the like are the occupations

and the sights in the midst of which country people grow up. They meet them at every turn; and since Holy Scripture makes such constant reference to them, it is plain that God intended us to make a religious use of such common, everyday matters. Those of my readers whose lot has been cast in the country from their childhood, are accustomed every day to see and to be busied about many of the things which our Saviour has sanctified by using them for His parables; and, without doubt, He wishes thereby to raise pious thoughts in their hearts, as they go about their daily work. As, for example, how often may the ploughman have a religious thought about the sufferings of our blessed Lord, how "the ploughers plowed upon His back, and made long their furrows," (Psalm cxxix. 3;) how by "His stripes" alone "we are healed," (Isaiah liii. 5;) or about that "broken and contrite heart," which must be ploughed up, as it were, by the grace of God, before the seed of His Word can bring forth fruit to perfection. In like manner, how many good thoughts may the sower pass his time withal, as he goes forth to sow his seed, and sees the birds flocking after him to catch away the seed which is scattered on the hard pathway, or on stony ground; and remembers how the devil and

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his angels are hovering about his own soul, to prevent what he has read in his Bible, or heard in church, from sinking deep into his heart. (Matt. xiii. 19.) Indeed, I suppose there

scarcely any one natural object, from the glorious bow with which God spans the sky, to the little rill of water which sparkles by the wayside, which has not its pattern in spiritual things, and may not teach some spiritual lesson, if the heart be opened to perceive its hidden meaning. The Wise Man says, "O how desirable are all His works! and that a man may see even to a spark."

All things are double, one against another; and He hath made nothing imperfect. One thing establisheth the good of another; and who shall be filled with beholding His glory?" (Ecclus. xlii. 2—25.)

We ought then diligently to exercise ourselves in looking for these spiritual meanings in natural objects. We should continually ask ourselves, Of what heavenly reality is this earthly object the picture? 'What truth that concerns my soul would God teach me by this parable?' In which truths God's works abound. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." (Psalm cxi. 2.) Now this subject is exemplified by the Gospel for the

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second Sunday after Easter. We have there set forth to us, under the beautiful picture of a shepherd keeping watch over his flock, the love and care of Jesus Christ for His Church, and for every member of that Church. In this country we can, in great measure, enter into our Lord's description, because we so constantly see flocks of sheep under the care of their shepherds. But those who heard Him speak in the land of Judea, would still more fully understand the force and beauty of His words. He speaks of a sheepfold ; not such an one as we now use, made of hurdles, set up and pulled down in a short space of time ; but a strong substantial building, enclosed within high walls, with a door to enter by, and a porter to keep the door ; such an enclosure as the thief must climb up if he would get in to do mischief. It was necessary in those countries to raise such strong substantial sheepfolds, both because the winter nights were too severe to keep the flocks in the open air, and also because of the wild beasts which abounded and prowled around, even as the Gospel speaks of the wolf coming to scatter the sheep. What then does this strong, securely-walled sheepfold signify ? It signifies the Church of Christ. That Church into which we were baptized ; in which we are brought

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under the immediate love and protection of Jesus Christ; and as long as we stay in Christ's Church we are safe. If we believe in Him and trust in Him with all our hearts, if we try to obey His commands, if we keep close to Him in His holy ordinances, if we thus stay in the fold, we are safe. Outside that wolf ranges who is our great enemy, the devil; the same who is elsewhere called the "roaring lion who walketh about seeking whom he may devour." If we remain within the fold he cannot really harm us. His temptations will but be like the harmless roarings of an evil beast of prey, which may sound terrible in our ears, but which we need not fear. If we wander without the fold, and forsake the only true Shepherd, we cannot assure ourselves of safety for a moment. And we must not fail to remark that there is but *one* such fold. Our Lord expressly says, "there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." He Himself is that one Shepherd, and He intends all His people to be one flock. He gave us commandment to love one another; He delights to see us all of one heart and one soul, all worshipping together, that there be no divisions among us, but that we be all perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment.

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again be one, when Christians from the east and west, and north and south, shall again agree in the truth of His holy Word, and live together, as they did in the Apostles' times, in unity and godly love.

But the shepherd does not only defend his flock from the wild beasts, he must also feed them in good pastures. And so Christ the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls promises, "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." It was prophesied of Him by Isaiah, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," (Is. xl. 11.) And again, "Behold I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. . . . I will feed

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My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. xxxiv. 11—15.) This is the same Saviour in whom David trusted in the twenty-third Psalm. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters." And again, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;" which words doubtless the Christian may use as referring to the rich and heavenly provision which the Good Shepherd has provided for him in the Holy Communion, to strengthen him on the road to everlasting life.

It is remarkable that the chief types of our blessed Lord in the Old Testament have been shepherds, as if on purpose to impress upon our minds the gentleness and unwearied care with which Christ would rule and feed His Church. The Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all of them types of Christ, were shepherds. Of Joseph it is not only said that when he was a youth, he was feeding his father's flock with his brethren, but in a far higher sense, when his brethren were settled in the land of Goshen, he said unto them, "Fear ye not, I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them and spake *kindly* unto them." In this respect Joseph was

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the especial type of Christ. For it was Christ's charge to St. Peter when He set him over His flock just before His ascension, "Feed My sheep," "feed My lambs." In like manner Moses was a shepherd; at one time literally so for forty years of his life in the mount of Horeb: and the Prophet Isaiah (Is. lxiii. 11) speaks of him as in an eminent manner the shepherd of the flock of God, when God made His people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock. King David too, another chief type of Christ, was once a shepherd boy, and kept his father's flock at Bethlehem, on those very plains where the angel host appeared to the shepherds with the good tidings of great joy that the promised Saviour was born. God took him from the sheepfolds, from following the ewes great with young ones, and exalted him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. On those plains of Bethlehem it was that David slew both the lion and the bear, and delivered the lamb out of their mouth; so shewing forth the strength of Christ our Shepherd, who will deliver every one who trusts in Him from the power of Satan. Yes, and when He has carried His flock safely through the trials and temptations of this world, He will bring them to that good land

where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. For He Himself "who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." Let us ask ourselves, Do we really hear and obey the voice of this good Shepherd? He brought us into the fold of His Church at our Baptism, He has watched over us with untiring love ever since. Do we really serve and love Him? Are we His sheep in reality and not in name only? There is one test we may try ourselves by. Do we hunger and thirst after that spiritual food which He offers us in His Church, that meat which endureth unto everlasting life? Oh! marvellous depth of love! That Good Shepherd hath not only died for us, but He also gives us Himself in His Sacrament, His own Body and Blood, to nourish and support our souls. This is the heavenly food He offers to all who will partake of it in faith. "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." But perhaps our consciences witness but too plainly that we have often and often wandered from the Shepherd of our souls, we have followed strangers, and strayed beyond the bounds of the true fold. What would become of us if it were not for another merciful office of

the Good Shepherd? This is the office He especially delights to fulfil, to reclaim the wandering sheep, to call home the prodigal. Every time we appear in God's house we take up the words of confession, "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep." And if we would be true penitents, we must turn that *general* confession into a *particular* one, and feel each one for himself, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep: Oh! seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments." We must not content ourselves with owning in a general way that we are miserable sinners; that would be but a hollow repentance: we must rather search each one into his own heart, and endeavour to collect together the many occasions when we have knowingly and wilfully gone after some sin, some foolish desire of our own heart; left the fold; run into the very path of the roaring lion; lost our way; and we should not even have wished to return, if it were not that Christ our Shepherd never lost sight of us. He followed us in our wanderings; by His gentle voice He recalled us; He put the first penitent thought into our heart; He fanned that little spark of penitence by the breath of His Holy Spirit; and the first time we said from the bottom of our heart, "I repent, Lord help

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Thou mine impenitence," immediately He was ready to forgive and welcome us again to His fold. And thus "He goes after that which is lost until He find it ; and when He hath found it, He layeth it on His shoulders rejoicing. And when He cometh home, He calleth together His friends and neighbours," (even the holy angels and His redeemed saints, who are for ever safe in His bosom,) "saying unto them, Rejoice with Me, for I have found My sheep which was lost." And there is joy in their presence over one sinner that repenteth. Is not this encouragement to hear of so merciful a Shepherd, who neither slumbers nor sleeps till He has reclaimed His poor wanderer ? Shall any sinner after this dare to say, 'There is no hope for me ; I have gone too far in sin ; I can never return to the fold ?' No, be assured the door of that fold is never shut against us in this world. Christ has never taken His eye off any sinner, however he may seem lost in sin. If he will but listen to His voice calling to him by his conscience, by his Bible, by his minister, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ;" if he will but listen to that gentle voice, the Good Shepherd is close at hand. He can *break* a way for him through all the briers and

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thorns of the wilderness in which he has so entangled himself, and lead him once more into the green pastures of pleasantness. He has done this for many prodigals and wanderers ere now, and He is ever the same compassionate Saviour. Mercy is His delightful work. This is His promise, "I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." (Ezek.xxxiv.16.)

Once more. The parable in the Gospel speaks of one part of the shepherd's watchful care, which the customs of our country fail to represent to us in the same lively manner with those of eastern countries. In the east it was usual for the shepherd not only to know every one of his flock apart from the rest, but to accustom them so to his voice, that they would follow him whithersoever he called them. The sheep were not *driven* from pasture to pasture, as they are among us, but always *led*, the shepherd going first, and sometimes by sounding a bell, or blowing a horn, but most frequently by the sound of his voice, enticing them onwards. And hence it has been remarked that there is no allusion in the Old Testament to the custom of *driving* the flock, whereas innumerable are the passages in

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which mention is made of *leading* and *guiding* them, going before them, and bringing them in. Our Lord evidently refers to this practice when He says, "And He calleth His own sheep by name," that is, He knows every individual of the flock perfectly well. And He "leadeth them out, and when He putteth forth His own sheep He goeth before them and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice; and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers." Now we may gather from this a most comfortable lesson—that Jesus Christ does not only govern and provide for His whole Church, but has also a particular love for each one of His people; each sheep, each lamb of His flock, as much (we may say I trust without irreverence) as much as if He had died for that one alone, as if that one were the only one who needed His care.

Just as a loving parent seems to spend all his care and thought upon that one of his children who is sick and ready to die, while in reality he loves all with an equally fond affection, so does our Lord love us one by one. We know that God telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names, and *not a sparrow falls to the ground without His*

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knowledge ; how much more then does He know each Christian by his name. He knows all the secret workings of his heart. Be he never so poor or despised in this world, yet he has a place in the very heart of Christ, as though that heart beat with love for him alone among that great multitude whom no man can number. Is any one in sore trial and trouble ? Jesus Christ knows the trial. He Himself lays that trial on His servant for his good. Only let him cast his burden upon Christ, He is perfect Man, and therefore He can feel for us in all things ; He is perfect God, and therefore He is "our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Or is any one strongly tempted ? or tied and bound by the chain of some sin ? Jesus Christ also knows how he is beset. He Himself was tempted in all points like as we are. He measures the strength of His servant, and will not suffer him to be tempted above that he is able to bear. Only let him fly to Christ for relief, His ear is open to his cry. He has marked that particular case, and He will remember it before the throne of God. By His all-powerful intercession we may each overcome the tempter.

Let us repose ourselves without doubting upon this boundless love. Let us firmly believe that

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our Saviour and Shepherd seeth and knoweth each one of us, and the particular needs of each, far better than we know them ourselves.

He laid down His life for each of us. Will He not then also freely give us all things which are necessary for our soul's health? Let us hearken attentively to His voice, when He calls to us by His Word, by His still small voice within, by His warning providences whether in our own lives, or the lives of those about us. Let us gladly follow that voice, answering in some faint degree love with love. Then will He guide us gently onwards, and we shall hear His voice, and mark His footsteps more and more distinctly on the road to the mountain of God, whither He has ascended to prepare a place for us. And if we follow Him faithfully unto the end, leaning on the Rod and Staff of His grace, when He appeareth the second time, still as the Chief Shepherd to divide once for all His sheep from the goats, He will set us on His right hand, and speak to us those most blessed words, "Come, ye children of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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THERE can be no doubt that this is a very, very beautiful world in which we live. It is a mere affectation to say it is not so. Beautiful in the sky, beautiful in the waters, beautiful in the earth itself. How lovely are the light airy clouds which glide gently along above, with the pale blue sky behind them: how glorious the colours of gold and violet and crimson which garnish the heavens as the sun goes down, or light up his path when he first appears. Who can go forth on one of these glad spring mornings, and see the first green of the larch, the opening buds of numberless flowers and plants, the glistening dewdrops, the freshness and life of all the creation; who can feel

“That rustling breeze so fresh and gay
That danceth forth at opening day,
And brushing by with joyous wing
Wakeneth each little leaf to sing”—

or who can hear the sweet note of the wren, or later in the day the hum of the bee, and the mixed voices of thousands of little insects, and not feel the truth that "all Thy works praise Thee, O Lord," and himself be stirred up to add, "and Thy saints give thanks unto Thee?" For truly, as regards ourselves, it is a very pleasant world. All these lovely sights and sounds, are lovely and beautiful not only in themselves, but to us. They strike us with feelings of delight. Almost without knowing it we are affected by them; and whether it be by what we see, or by what we hear, or by what we taste, or by what we feel, there are continual pulses, as we may call them, of pleasure rising and swelling through our bodies, and making life pleasant. After all, it is God's world still. The mark of that Being who has "filled all things living with plenteousness" is still upon it. The impress of His mercy and goodness remains. The judgment which the Almighty, about to rest from creation, pronounced, when He "saw every thing that He had made, and behold! it was very good," still dwells thereon.

But why do I say "after all" and "still dwells?" Do you ask me? Does not, even whilst we admire and praise the manifold works

of wisdom beautiful and lovely as they are, does not there arise a feeling that will not be kept down, that it is not always so, nor all so? are there not many who day by day can see the beauties of nature, and yet never feel them? to whom the freshness of the spring morning, the quiet of the summer evening, the painted sky, the singing birds, the humming joyous insects, are all a blank; seen, but not perceived; heard, but not regarded? And sadder still, are there not many of those even who *can* feel and love the beauty of the world we live in, who yet cannot hide from themselves that its beauty is marred, its loveliness ever and anon interrupted? Come and look at this little flower: it is now opening itself out to the day, budding and blooming in full beauty. But look again after a time; the sun has withdrawn its ray, the flower fades and droops. What a picture of our souls when *our* sun, the light of God's countenance, is withdrawn, and the heart which was brightening up with hope, faints and is discouraged! See again that little bird. To-day he is clapping his little wings, pecking here and there, joyous and sprightly: to-morrow as you go forth, you find him perhaps in your path; his feathers puffed and disordered, his eye clouded, scarcely able to

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beautiful flowers trailed over by some loathsome beast ; still beautiful, but all more or less spoilt, and no longer rendering that unalloyed pleasure which they ought to give forth.

Of course there is a reason for this. We *know* that God made every thing "very good," and Adam and Eve at first perfectly holy and happy. And the same Holy Book which teaches us that, teaches us also how it became altered for the worse. What is it which made the earth "bear thorns and thistles?" What turned brotherly love into envy? Whence came pride, self-will, deceit? What is the origin from which all our sorrows flow? what indeed but *sin*? A little word, a great thing. A creeping, winding serpent, winding itself into us: multiplying itself into a thousand; lying coiled up in every part of our heart; spreading its venom all round, and corrupting all we do, or say, or think. This is whence sorrow comes; sorrow to ourselves, and to others. Sin makes us discontented. Sin makes others provoking. Sin prevents us from bearing and forbearing. Sin makes others careless, ourselves peevish. Sin comes and vents its poison on our best intentions and resolutions; turns the dutiful child into an undutiful one; the kind husband into one hasty and cross; stirs up jealousies be-

tween neighbours; raises a rebellious spirit in the younger ones; turns reverence into superstition, faith into presumption, thriftiness and prudence into covetousness: spoils all it touches, and succeeds in tainting the best intentions, in discolouring the holiest purposes. Oh! what a sinner is sin. It is in its works you will see the cause of all your unhappiness, and may trace all your sorrows to its influence.

It is a fearful thing to look at two great armies meeting each other in deadly warfare, killing, wounding, maiming each other; in other words, using the skill and strength which God gave for good and holy service to Himself, for such fearful purposes against each other. Sin is at the bottom of all strife, and it is easy to see that sorrow, rather than so-called glory, is the fruit of it. But we need not look to war and battles only. Look close at hand. You see that young man coming down the street—he is singing—listen! Ah, it is some lewd filthy song: and those two men behind—hark! they are quarrelling, cursing each other; they will come to blows soon. Alas! is it not a fearful thing to hear that voice, those lips which God made “very good,” employed in such a service? There is sorrow there too; sorrow to the aged mother, or trembling wife, who so

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anxiously have prayed for them : and sorrow to themselves too, when they can recognise the serpent sin which has excited them to abuse God's gifts to them.

We know the old proverb, "Cure sin, and you cure sorrow." Put the case plainly. You, my child, if you were always dutiful and obedient, would not your parents be happy, and pleased, and make you so too? I know they would. And you, my friend, are a servant. If you were *always* diligent and attentive, would your master be vexed with and chide you? and if he did not, would not you be happier? To be sure you would. But I know what you will say. 'Our masters must cure their sins as well as I mine, if we are to have no sorrow.' To be sure ; that is the very point. If there were no sin there would be no sorrow ; and just in proportion as we can keep down sin, will happiness rise in the scale. But what are we to say to pain, sickness, and death itself : they do not come to us from other people's faults ; they seem sent from God? Very true, at first sight. God does permit and send them ; but why did He *at first* permit them to fall upon us? Here is the answer. "By one man sin entered into the world, and *death* by sin." We do not indeed individually have bodily pain

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and sickness because a neighbour may have provoked us, or done some evil, but we do have them because of *sin* generally. They are the *consequences* of sin being in the world: part of the temporal punishment which has fallen upon a disordered and corrupted nature.

Now let us look upon this seriously. Whether sorrow, such as grief and disappointments, the breaking up friendship, and dashing aside of hopes, and the wounded spirit, and the aching heart, comes to us on account of our own faults, or is the fault of others; or whether our sorrows be such as flesh *now* is heir unto, accidents and pain, and sickness and death, poverty, want, ruin; whether they be inward or outward evils, they have all one parent;—sin. And wherever sin is, there will be sorrow. Sin then must be taken clean out of the way, or ever there can be perfect happiness. Why is it that in the book of the Revelation the heavenly Jerusalem is represented as so perfectly glorious and happy, but because “there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.” The removal of sin, the blotting it out, reducing it to *a nothing*; this is the crowning act of salvation. When that is done, there *can* be no sorrow.

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With regard then to this great end, how do we stand?

In the first place, one great blow has been given to sin by our Lord Jesus Christ,—He having forbidden it as we may say to hurt us after death. He has confined it to this life; He has cut short its power; He has delivered us for ever from the curse of original sin. But this, as we know, is not all. For what was He manifested? Wherefore did He come upon earth? “That He might *destroy* the works of the devil,” i. e. sin. And this not by only bearing our sins, and making atonement for them to the Father, but by imparting a power to us from Himself, enabling us to cope with sin, and to subdue it, and keep it under in ourselves. But neither is this all, great and important as it is. It pleased Him indeed to be “made sin for us,” and in the character of a sinner, nay, of sin itself, to die upon the cross. That was the bruising of His heel by the old serpent; that, if we may so speak, was sin’s victory over Him. A very short triumph. The third day saw His resurrection; the grave, hitherto sin’s servant, now knew another master. Death! give up thy prisoner; thy power is broken! thy sting is drawn! Sin has done its worst, and henceforward shall have

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no more lasting dominion, for the kingdom of grace is begun !

The Resurrection then was the pledge that the removal of sin altogether should take place. It was a token, oh ! how precious, that another and greater power had appeared on earth. It was a beacon of life ; a trumpet-call, “ Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope.” But our Lord’s resurrection was not the end of all things ; it was followed by a short stay upon earth, during which no visible change was made : and even the Ascension left the disciples in this world still surrounded with temptations, anxieties, and sorrows ; with sin still apparently all-powerful round them. But the pledge has been given ! We have something to look to ; we can point to the empty sepulchre, and say, ‘ Sin could not hold its own. Our Master has broken forth and gone.’ We too will follow after a time, but here we must remain now, and struggle on with the powers of darkness, in sorrow and anxiety it may be, but ever as we turn towards the light of Easter, in sure and certain hope of freedom from sin at last.

At last ! Yes, when He comes again, sin shall be put in utter subjection under Him. “ There shall be no more curse then, no more death, nei-

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ther sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

But let us turn to the Gospel, and we shall see how the removal of sorrow is connected with the presence of our blessed Lord. "A little while, and ye shall not see Me." From Friday evening to Sunday morning, He was not seen; He was in the grave. "Again a little while; and ye shall see Me." For the short period of forty days after His resurrection was our Lord still upon earth, and then He went to the Father. His absence, whether in the grave, or after His ascension, was matter of joy to the world, the evil world, who loved not His light, because its deeds were evil. But contrariwise to the disciples it was grief. "But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you;" and so His return to life was indeed matter of extreme joy to them. Now the whole of this passage bears a further meaning. The disciples here seem to represent the whole Church throughout all ages; their sorrow, to be the state of sorrow and trial in which we now are; the "little while" of our Lord's absence in the grave, to be this period in which we are shut out from the bodily presence of our Lord; His seeing them again, and their

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joy thereat, to be the time of His again appearing at the end of the world, "without sin unto salvation," and the perfect consummation, the fulness of happiness, which will then accrue to all who "look for Him."

We are *now* in a state in which we must have sorrow. For our Lord is personally absent, and sin is not as yet clean removed. And if we take sorrow in its large sense, for tribulation, what a sad variety of sorrows is there! One kind of sorrow is seen in that restless form which lies tossing upon the bed of pain: another in those weeping eyes which have just taken their last earthly look at what has been long the object of hope and prayer and love. That sad and downcast mother mourning over the shame of a loved child, shews us another form. In those starving sickly children you see it in another dress. That meek and gentle face which has just turned away from some unkind gibe or sneer, speaks sorrow again, but sorrow of the highest, holiest nature; such sorrow as our Lord manifested when He cried, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." The look so anxious, now so sad, which that faithful friend had fixed upon his wavering scholar, speaks too of sorrow, of *hope disappointed*, expectations de-

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ceived. Nor is it only from positive wickedness, or actual affliction, that we find ourselves so beset with sorrows, but even in the holiest, and what ought to be the happiest moments, some blot of grief finds place. We meet for prayer, but our numbers are so thin ; we look for sympathy, but some difference of opinion steps in, and checks it; we join together for some holy object, but a lukewarm member hangs back and thwarts us. We strive to love Christ, and the world round us laughs. Everywhere on all sides we feel our Lord's words to be true, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." But what? Shall all this beat us down? God forbid. Nay, come, look at it manfully, christianly! Why, such as we are here, sorrow is a positive good ; for think! if with sin the world were happy, we should never look for a better. Sorrow is a mercy. 'Yes, I must have and meet it,' the Christian says, 'but it is only for a "little while."' Shall I give in to it? Have I forgotten those words, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world?" If it be so indeed, blessed Jesus! give me in Thy strength and name to overcome too. Give me to look upon sorrow, as all that sin now can do against me, and to press all the more towards Thy appearing.

There seems to be no more true test of a

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deep Christian spirit than the desire to be with Christ ; than the power of feeling His presence to be what we really want. And so it is that sorrow and tribulation often bring it out. Under their pressure the soul becomes awakened to a sense of the disappointing nature of earthly things, and aware that this life is indeed a valley of tears. But yet of course the spirit that we ought to be of is neither restlessness on the one side, nor mere *light-heartedness* on the other. It must not be a mere desire for heaven, because only we feel life so uncomfortable just at present, whilst we are under affliction. Nor must it be a mere indifference of disposition, which makes us pass lightly through the world only because we do not feel deeply about *any thing*. We must not deceive ourselves with either of these shadows of Christian joy, these pretences to a desire for Christ's presence ; but our sense of a Saviour's work, our adoration of the Saviour's character, our consequent longing for the Saviour's presence, must be that charm which shall render life's necessary sorrows bearable, though grievous for the present they must always be. His coming again and seeing us will be the signal that they are all past, and the trial over. Here, now, we have daily felt that a thousand things could *spoil our happiness*. No plan hardly has been

trifling circumstances. But the distinctive heavenly joy, is its firm unchangeableness. peculiar excellence of the happiness which arise from the presence of the Lamb—therefore—is, that it cannot be taken away. And why because it will be a happiness founded on the enjoyment of *His* presence who is forever lasting. The Rock of Ages will be the ground-work. The “everlasting Son” will be the cornerstone. Safe in the bosom of the Good Shepherd, the lamb will dread no more the roar of the “roaring lion.” Safe in the “tabernacle not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” once poor and outcast wanderer will dwell forever an heir of glory. Safe in the ark of the Church triumphant the once buffeted and

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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Our Lord present, though risen.

FOR forty days Christ continued on earth after He rose from the dead. After His resurrection, some mysterious change had come over His body. It was prepared, if we may so say, for its flight on high, where it was to "pass through the heavens." Yet the Son of God appeared in the same body which had been pierced, and with the same pure, loving, and compassionate soul, which had won the reverent love of those who were in their measure like to Him. And being on His way to carry the proofs and trophies of His sufferings and victory into the presence of God, He tarried for a while upon the earth. In His journey from the lower parts of the earth to the highest heaven, He paused for forty days, sojourning for a little while in this middle world. These forty days were strange days to the disciples, and all those who believed on and loved the Son of

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Man : they were living all this time in a state of solemn expectation, of breathless awe, of wonder and of joy, mixed with fear. There was a great mystery going on near them, and they could not tell what would come of it. The rumour was now spread about that the Lord whom they had mourned had been seen alive again. And the first report gained strength as it spread wider, and as the days passed on, more witnesses came forward and declared that they had again "seen and heard and handled the word of life." "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, after that He was seen of James, then of all the Apostles." So the truth became known and noised abroad. Now among the multitudes who had seen Him working His mighty works, and listened to His persuasive words, were many who were drawn irresistibly to love Him ; of these many had been keeping the feast at Jerusalem, and could not fail on their return to commune among themselves on all the things which they had seen and heard.

The news reached those villages and towns where He had taught, that the great teacher, the Prophet mighty in word and deed, had died on the accursed tree ; but that He had since shewn

Himself alive by many infallible proofs. Surely many a loving heart beat high when they heard these things. There was widely spread a thrill of awe and expectation, and many hopes were again fastened on Him whose wondrous works of mercy were well remembered, and of whom these yet greater wonders were credibly affirmed. And if these tidings sensibly affected those at a distance, those who lived throughout Judea and Galilee, much more solemn was the time of these forty days to those who tarried yet at Jerusalem. When they went into the upper chamber it was with almost an expectation of meeting *Him* there, in whom their love and hope were all bound up. When they met for prayer, they had a feeling that *He* might come and pronounce the blessing with His own lips. They knew that He was very near them, though they knew not how or where He lived. They knew He might appear to them when they were walking in the country, or in their fishing boats on the sea. Think what their feelings must have been. How often must their hearts have "burned within" them! How earnestly must they have prayed! What a solemn joy must have rested upon their souls! How serious and thoughtful, how reverent, must they have been in all their ways!

Lord and my God. There was no longer room for doubt ; the Lord was risen indeed, if *death* had no power to hold Him fast, would feel sure that no human hand could His will. And then, as this assurance be firmly fixed, the disciples would naturally en what was the purpose and object of these drous things, and how they would end. would ask themselves how it was that thei loved Master had submitted to be slain, s that He had power to rise again from the They would wonder why He did not alway with them as He had formerly done, why H Himself from all but those who believed on and only appeared to them at certain times that in a mysterious manner. They would

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fight against the enemies of His kingdom without the encouragement and aid of His personal presence. And then, after a little time, they would remember how He had always said He should leave them alone in the world. He had declared before His passion that He would soon return to His Father in heaven. He had given them directions what to do when He was gone, and made known to them how they would be the gainers by His departure, and what blessings He would grant them to console them for His loss. Such words would be explained by the present circumstances of the disciples, by what they saw and heard. They would now begin to realize their meaning and understand their drift. And the predictions themselves, on the other hand, would explain His mysterious words and actions, and lead them to believe that the foreordained will of God was being surely and steadily fulfilled.

Now the passage appointed as the Gospel for the day contains some of these sayings of our Lord, by which before He was crucified He explained to the disciples that He must leave them and return to the Father. It is very suitable for the fourth Sunday after Easter, because the disciples would, as you have seen, be very apt at

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this time to recal to mind such parts of His teaching as this. He says, "I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." And again, "When He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth." And in saying this He spake even for us no less than for them. The words by which He prepared the Apostles for His departure are instructive to us now that He is gone.

Another promise by which He consoled His disciples, saying that their prayers offered in His name would henceforth be certainly heard, is noticed in the Gospel for next Sunday.

Let us now consider this gracious and comforting assurance which the Church has set before us for our instruction this day, and which is alluded to in the Collect and Epistle, no less than in the Gospel. Listen then and learn from Himself why Christ our Saviour did not stay always on the earth, and what we gain by His going away. He departed that the Comforter might come. God the Son returned to heaven, but only that He might send down the ever-blessed Spirit of the Father, to carry on and finish His work on earth. It is expedient for

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that so it should be. It is better for us that Christ should be in heaven, and His Spirit on earth. Partly, perhaps, because in this way our faith is tried and proved. If the Son of God were visibly present on earth, if we were able to see Him with our bodily eyes as St. Paul did, all of glory and clothed with brightness, we could not have such occasion to exercise and strengthen the precious grace of faith. We could not win the blessing which our Lord Himself promised to those who "have not seen and yet have believed." And we may observe that this is very like the way in which God deals with us in other things. When He takes away something from us, He gives us something better in its place; when He denies us some petition, He fulfills our desire very often in some other and better way; He seems to refuse our request, but it is only that He may give us more than we ask for; He seems to wound us, but it is only as a physician might hurt us in order to restore us to sounder health. So when the Son of God went away, He sent His Spirit, which was better for us. His personal presence was removed, His spiritual presence was given instead. And for us in the present it is a more blessed gift, partly, as I have said, because it leaves more room for the exercise

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of faith. *Now* we do not see, yet we believe. Now we do not behold those divine features, which were marred more than any man's; we do not see Him lifting up His pierced hands to bless those for whose sins they were torn. Yet we by the grace of God believe that Christ died and rose again, we believe that His sorrow is the cause of our joy, His shame the foundation of our glory, His death the occasion of our life.

"In Him though we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Do you, my Christian brother, thus indeed believe on and love the Saviour of mankind? Are you every year pondering more earnestly and thankfully on the great work which He has done for you? Are you learning to love with an overflowing affection that Almighty friend without whose help you must perish eternally? Is your heart warming towards Him, clinging to Him? Do you long to see Him who died for you, long before you began to live, that your life might not be a curse to you and lead you to eternal death? Do you say and feel of Him, "Whom have I in heaven, O Lord, but Thou, and there is none on earth I desire in comparison of Thee?" Blessed are you if you so believe and so love Him whom you have not

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men. And we must believe also in His spiritual presence at this time among us. In His own person He stayed but a short time upon earth ; by His Spirit He abides among us for ever. He is present in every Christian congregation ; He is present in every Sacrament of the Christian Church ; He is present in every Christian soul, and dwelling in every regenerate heart.

And this, as I said before, we gain by His departure, that in all these things though our Lord is indeed very near us, blessing us with inestimable gifts, yet we have to perceive Him with the eye of faith, and to embrace Him with the hand of faith. He does not come into our churches when the doors are shut, and stand visibly in the midst and say, "Peace be with you ;" yet blessed are we if we believe that He is indeed in the midst of us in His house, shedding abroad His peace by the blessed Spirit, blessing us though unseen. He it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost when His minister baptizes with water. It is He who is our spiritual food and sustenance in the Supper of the Lord. Yet because He is gone away into heaven we have now only the assurance of faith that He is near to us. We have to live by faith, to seize on His promises by faith, to realize His presence in the Church

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by faith. Again, we do not meet with Him as did the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. We are not in a continual expectation of seeing Him, as were the Apostles during those forty wonderful days when He came in and out among them. Yet if we will believe it, more blessed are we than they. He is with us by His Spirit, leading us into all truth. Taking of "the things of Christ," He shews them unto us ; He opens to us new views of the love and mercy of our Redeemer, and enlightens our minds that we may see Him more clearly as He is. Have you never seemed to hear God speaking to your heart, secretly it may be, yet clearly ? Have you never felt that God had sent *you* a direct message ? Have you not known some warning pressed home upon you so that you could not resist it ; some sharp reproof pricking your conscience and forcing you to attend ? Have you never felt your heart burn within you, when in some moment of devotion, perhaps in the house of God, or at the Holy Communion, you seemed for a moment to see clearly the ineffable mercy of God ? Have you never known what it is to have a clear view for a time of the greatness of your sin, of the love of Christ, of the shortness of this world, of the glory of heaven ? Blessed

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you if you believed that this was the voice of the risen Son of Man speaking to you though you saw Him not. Did you turn at His word? Did you obey the message? did you cherish the gift of spiritual vision? did you say "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth?" Christ then is still very near us, still blessing us, still instructing us, still guiding us, yet our faith is exercised in this, that He works by His Spirit, and is ritually present, and so the blessing is doubled to those who receive and worship Him though they cannot see Him.

And there is another great benefit and gain which we receive from the presence among us of the promised Comforter, the Spirit of God. It is expedient for us that the Son of God should depart, and the Spirit of God should come down in His stead, because of the work which must needs be carried on in us by the Spirit. The Father of God had finished His own work, that part of the great scheme of redemption which was given Him to do, and then there was need of the Holy Spirit to finish that great scheme, by the operations which are proper to Him. There is work, and that a very needful work, properly belonging and especially suitable to the Third person in the Holy Trinity. His work is as

it is a hidden secret work, seen only in it and that not perfectly in this world ; the work of renewal or sanctification. Su- parent was very anxious for the welfare of his child, and desirous that he should hold a high station in the world, and seeing that he could be heir to no property whatever, should go into a distant land, and there at great labour and pain collect a fortune which he might freely give to his beloved child. This was in a measure like the work of God towards us. He did it *for* us, and not *with* us, *in* us ; we had no share in it whatever. His work was finished before we were created. But though if he were wise, would wish not only to leave a great estate for his darling child, but

; the money he was collecting would soon squandered, or his son would be unfit for the position in the world to which his wealth would really entitle him. May we not understand by figure how needful the renewing, sanctifying work of the blessed Spirit of God must be for every one whom Christ has redeemed. His work goes on, the work of the Holy Ghost begins. It is a work in which we are called upon to join. It works in us, and with us, and we must work with Him and by His strength; else though so true an inheritance has been purchased and bestowed upon us by the Son of God, we shall be poorer for it; we shall squander it away; we shall not be fit to enjoy it. My Christian brother, do you believe and embrace this truth? Are you ready to praise God the Holy Ghost for His work in the work of your salvation? Do you believe not only that Christ died for you, and so purchased for you a kingdom, but that He also poured down His most blessed and Holy Spirit to enable you to meet for that bright inheritance? O that His love be wasted upon you; pray Him to live in you and finish His work in you; be careful lest you hinder that work; seek to help it forward by obedience and watchfulness; seek to be 'renewed in the spirit of your mind.'

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You will find your desires for the rene-
grace of the Comforter well expressed in to-
collect. In that you confess that God
“can order the unruly wills and affection
sinful men,” and therefore you pray that
would help you to love that which He comm-
and to desire that which He promises. Th-
the inward work which the Holy Spirit mu-
in you ; this is the work which Christ our
viour sent Him to do. He will do it by the
pernatural power of His grace, by His di-
spiritual might, by which He is able to trans-
and renew the spirits of sinful men. Our
and affections are unruly. Our *will*, by which
choose and determine what we will do, is like
untamed colt, difficult to be guided in the ri-
path, and towards the right objects. But
Holy Spirit can strengthen us to rule this w-
ward and perverse will, so that it may be te-
down and made obedient to the holy law of
Our affections too are unruly. They f-
wrong and unworthy objects. They lead
love what is sinful and impure, and not
things only which are truly fit to be loved b-
they are holy and divinely beautiful. An-
blessed Spirit can guide and rule these -
affections, restrain them within due boun-

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rem on things lawful and worthy to be loved ;
He can teach us and guide us to love that which
God commands, and to desire that which He
has promised. By nature we love our own way ;
by grace we may come to love God's way better ;
by nature we admire, and choose, and seek after
the good things and pleasures which this world
holds out before us ; by grace we learn to love
and desire far more those blessed hopes of eternal
life which God has given us in our Saviour Jesus
Christ. This is the work of the Spirit, dwelling
in our spirits, and giving to them a share in His
own purity, filling them by degrees with His own
light and gladness.

For such reasons it was expedient that Christ
should go away and send the Comforter in His
place. We want renewing as well as redeeming,
we need the sanctifying grace which we can
only have from the spirit of Christ "dwelling in
us," and working in us. What we want is a
divine gift, a gift above and beyond our human
nature, a gift which shall make us more than
men, and bring us nearer God by making us
more like to Him. This is that good and per-
fect gift which, as the Epistle tells us, must be
from above, and come down from the Father of
lights." All praise then to the Father, who sent

tion in us, if we have not given them our
hearts.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

Christian Action.

To persuade men even to hear the Word is a hard matter ; we have much ado to get them within the sound of the Gospel. Many shrink even from this the lowest step of the ladder by which we mount to heaven. The first thing we have to contend with is an unwillingness to hear. Speak of this duty to those that neglect it, and they will have an excuse ready at hand. As regards church, the weather, their clothes, the length of the service, the distance, a seat to their mind, their farm, their merchandise, something there is always in the way ; they hope to be better soon, they have resolved to change—so they run on deceiving their own selves with such excuses for not hearing the Gospel preached as they will not dare to utter before the throne of God when they come to be judged at the last day. But let us take the *case of those who hear.* Is it all well

fulfil. If there had been none such, there have been no need of the teaching of the S the Epistle of the day ; He knew our w when He gave us the exhortation, " Be y of the Word and not hearers only." H the deceitfulness of the heart of man ; h posed we are to lessen our measures of r service, to relax His holy law, to decei selves in our religious duties, to smooth d sharp edges of the Gospel law, and to sit shadow of the cross instead of taking it u knew that we should be tempted and tempt ourselves to put the form of godlin the power, to do the easier parts and le harder parts of Christian obedience ; Hence came this exhortation " Be ye d

godliness ; do not content yourselves with feasting your ears on the blessed promises of God, nor with satisfying the appetite of your ears, nor with having strong feelings of devotion to Christ, nor with fair resolutions for your future life. In this way we may expand these words. The Spirit, through St. James the Apostle of Christ, charges us to go forth instantly and act as becometh children of light and heirs of heaven, to set ourselves to the high and sublime work of preparing ourselves for heaven in the midst of the common cares of our station and daily life. It is God the Holy Ghost who counsels, now speaking to us in Holy Scripture, who have drunk of the Spirit of grace and tasted that the Lord is gracious. By God's help let us hear this counsel and keep it ; add, brethren, good actions to good thoughts, doing to hearing, deeds to words, performance to promises, fulfilment of good desires to desires formed, habits of devotion to feelings of devotion. It is good for us that we came to hear, but we must guard against barren unfruitful hearing. The Gospel is not a mere sound. It is designed to change our hearts, and our hearts should change our lives, God's Spirit helping us in that work. The more other men refuse to hear, the more must we not only hear but do,

lest they also be tempted to sleep like others
lest by reason of so much unwatchfulness
the Lord refuse to keep the city. It is high
for us all to become more holy in our lives
like our Lord in all holy conversation and
manner, for we have all had our dull seasons
careless days, our sleep, our unwatchful
nights, our times of sin and wickedness when
we were almost without God in the world.

Few can say they have been growing in holiness
continually from their youth, that they
walked consistently all their lives in the full
love of God. Of those who are now seeking
to be saved, that they may be with Christ forever
and with the brethren who sleep in Christ
who were in times past cold and dead dead and

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the things of God after those bare and unfruitful times, for our term of grace shortens ; the Gospel is passing on ; it will soon be preached in the ears of others and no more in ours. We are but strangers and sojourners as all our fathers were ; the world will not stop for us, nor the wheel of time cease to whirl. Our generation will not keep the world standing still till we have got rid of all our worldly cares, and till all is made smooth for the service of our Lord. Though we may each have something now in our way which seems to hinder us from a more complete devotion of ourselves to Christ, think not, brethren, that whatever that hindrance be, we shall not have other hindrances, other cares, other pleasures, other interests, to choke up the way afresh between us and God when these are gone. We must not stand on the brink waiting for the river of worldly temptation to dry, that we may cross over dry-shod to God's side. Burst the bonds of present cares, be resolute and brave, quit yourselves like men. It will be no easier next year than this to overcome sin, to serve your Lord acceptably ; the way is narrow now, it will be narrow then ; nay narrower and steeper and rougher still, for a year's idleness in the things of God weakens the spiritual man,

do, and having visions of devotion and dre
holiness and fair resolutions and deceivin
poses, and nothing at last to take befo
throne of God but a multitude of barren
and unfulfilled intentions. Like the c
virgins they had lamps in their hands l
oil in their lamps, leaves but no fruit, th
of godliness but not the power, profession
faith but not faithful practice, a full e
empty hands, a store of truth in the head
lack of holiness in the life. Felix hear
trembled at the hearing of the Word ; A
heard, and was almost persuaded to be a
tian ; Herod heard John Baptist gladly a
served him ; Judas both heard and preach
Gospel not what came of all that he

and stirrings of conscience, and yet letting their passions rule, clinging to their favourite sins, making no hearty efforts for victory over sin, easily drawn aside by evil companions or entangled in their old ways. O the thousands that have been lost that thought to be saved, the thousands that are lost who were all their lives purposing to be Christ's but ended in being the world's, that have gone forth without fruit of real living faith to lay before Christ at the day of judgment, though they were always exhorted to seek the Lord while He might be found, and though they were ever intending to be doers of the Word before their deaths! If the spirits of the dead could come back and speak to us on earth, the spirits of those who were always hearing without doing, with what an intense earnestness would they beseech us who as yet can do the Word as well as hear, instantly to give ourselves with all the energy of a resolute and devoted will to the work of Christ! with what passionate pleadings would they press us not to waste any more this short hurrying life in mere intentions to be Christ's, but now at once and without delay to break the bonds asunder that separate us from Him, and at once to enter upon a "godly, righteous, and sober life!" They can-

not speak ; but we have Moses and the prophets, nay, we have Christ and the Apostles. The voice of Christ is heard amongst us, though the voice of the dead is not suffered to rise up ; the voice of Christ our future Judge, who knoweth what He will require in the judgment, tells us what He will require. Our Judge Himself forewarns us what witnesses we must bring before Him at our trial if we would escape the fiery indignation that will devour His adversaries. "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves ;" He shews us to what manner of self-deceit we are exposed. He now bids us mortify our sins, purify our lives, cleanse our consciences, resist our lusts, deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and thus to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

And think, brethren, how great this work is which we have to do, really to become more and more like our blessed Lord, to purify ourselves even as He is pure, to strive for a sort of angelic and heavenly state of soul which even the appearance of evil would disturb. When we think of those words that the pure in heart shall see God, and then consider all the

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purities of our thoughts, all our angers and our acts of selfishness, all our harshness of speech, all our love of worldly opinion, and all our hot and eager interest in worldly things, we are how far we are from that gentle, unselfish, pure, guileless mind which becomes men who are waiting for Christ, and are called by Him the children of light." Who after all is equipped for heaven? In whom is heaven beginning now? Is the light breaking through? Who is weary of the world and longing to pass away and cry out like St. John, "Come Lord Jesus," and wishing that he had the wings of a dove that he might flee away and be at rest? So cold are our hearts and earthy and full of worldly ways, worldly interests, and worldly views, that we cling to the old and could not say we are longing for Christ to come. And yet how soon our change may come! How soon all these scenes may pass before our eyes and our homes pass from our sight, and friends' faces and the speech of men and the bustle of the world, farms, fields, and all that makes up the scene of human life, may very soon may all have vanished as a dream when one awaketh! He who is gone from us to heaven, whose ascension we celebrate so soon, (or rather ought to celebrate,) beseeches us

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to prepare for that day. He wants us to watch for that coming. He tells us how to watch; He helps us with His spirit, when we desire to consecrate our lives to Him; He accepts our prayers when we try to pray; and leads us mercifully on, and is gentle with us when we turn to a holy life. He gives us peace and lightness of heart as a present reward for doing His will. What more can He do? He is sparing us for our good; He has borne with us and with our sin; He has lifted us up when we have fallen; He has comforted us in our sorrows; He has refreshed us in our repentances, and succoured us in our need. When our father and mother forsake us, He taketh us up; when our friends fail or when they die, He that never faileth and never dies is our friend instead; when our worldly means lessen He is our riches; when we are sick He is our comforter; when we desire to do good it is by the inspiration of His Spirit; when we do good He helps us in the work.

Give then yourself to your Lord; give yourself afresh; you owe Him all things, and He has done all things for you that partake of good; every good gift and every perfect gift is from His bountiful hand. Turn not away from Him; seek not your own way; befriend yourself by

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being the friend of Christ. Follow not evil ways; tear not yourself out of your Saviour's hands, who has apprehended you for your good, and whose prisoner you are, that you may have His recompense of reward. Yield your neck to His blessed yoke; be not wanton and self-willed; neither be a mere talker of religion. Do not say "Sir, I go," without going. Do not hear a command from God without fulfilling it: but cast yourself at once, thoroughly and with all your heart, into the way of obedience and of active service for your Lord. Prove yourself a soldier, not by having a soldier's name and a soldier's dress, not by using soldiers' words and talking like a man of war, but by quitting yourself like a man in the field of battle. God will defend you as with a shield; God will help you and that right early.

A FEW WORDS CONCERNING THE OBSERVANCE OF ASCENSION DAY.

The great feast of our Saviour's ascension is at hand. I most earnestly pray you to keep it holy to the Lord. It has fallen into strange neglect among us; we do not meet to look towards our ascended Lord, as the early Christians

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were wont to do ; we have ceased to make it a day of holy joy. The world has taken it from the Church ; it has gotten one great day from our hands which was once thankfully given up to God and consecrated to prayer and praise. Though we meet together to observe the day of our Redeemer's birth, of His death, of His resurrection, strange to say, the glorious day of His ascension has practically ceased to be a holy feast. We will not leave our business, our trade, our shops, our ploughs, to bless God as with one heart for that crowning and triumphant act of the mystery of Christ. The Church indeed still calls out to us ; the bell sounds in our ears ; the clergy are ready to do their part, the Prayer-book keeps the feast in its own high place among the other feasts. O slight no more then this great and glorious day. " Let the dead bury their dead ; " let the worldly steal, if they will, a Christian festival and use it for their worldly ends ; but do you go up to your house of prayer. Do you begin this year to offer praise in the congregation for the ascension of your Lord. Do you leave your trade, your shop, your worldly business, even if it be a loss, for such a loss will be a gain as regards your soul.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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Our Lord's Ascension.

THE Feast of our blessed Lord's Ascension has not been duly regarded of late in the English Church, and the directions of the Prayer-book on this matter have been despised. Ranked as it was in the primitive Church among the very greatest festivals, and having now with us peculiar Psalms, and Preface in the Holy Communion office, it should be the endeavour of all Christians to honour it as the Church intends. But then this honour must depend upon what we call to mind this day, and the blessings secured to us by what our Lord did, or began to do, to-day. This is what we have now to consider.

1. On this day then He completed the work which He had to do upon earth. On this day He withdrew His bodily presence from His Church; but unless this were the means and prelude to

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other blessings, the withdrawal of His presence would only cause us to moan and lament. This our Lord foresaw ; and therefore He set before His disciples many words of comfort, and tried to turn their sorrow into joy in the discourse, which St. John has given us (chap. xiv., xv., xvi.) Except He went from them, and ascended to His Father, He could not secure to them the inestimable blessings, that He had in store for them. “It is expedient for you that I go away for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.” (John xvi. 7.) For our good then He ascended, as for our good He came down from heaven. For our good He was born and lived in the world ; for our good He died and rose again. In all, He had in view the exaltation of our nature ; to purge us from dead works, to secure the pardon of our sins, to destroy in us the tyranny of evil habits, to blot out their stain, to cancel their guilt ; to fill us with holy thoughts, with pure desires, with good counsels, with just works, and self-denying habits ; to exalt us from sinners to saints, not to “make us partakers of the divine nature ;” (2 Pet. i. 4 ;) for this He came down from heaven ; for this He ascended to heaven again. *It was in our nature, glorified and spiritualized*

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indeed, as was evidenced in the forty days He remained upon earth after His resurrection, yet essentially in our nature, (Art. iv.,) in all that pertains to the truth and perfection of man's nature, united, as we must never forget, to His eternal and divine nature, He ascended into heaven: and this is the point on which we have to fix our thoughts and hearts to-day. **THERE IS A MAN IN HEAVEN**: not figuratively nor metaphorically; not in the regions of departed spirits, where Abraham and Moses are, where Elijah and Enoch, His types under the law and before the law, may be; not in the firmament, (sometimes called heaven,) but in the highest heaven, far above all heavens, even on the throne of glory, even at the right hand of the eternal Father; and there not for a short time, as St. Paul was, if we rightly understand his words, when he heard things unutterable, but sitting and abiding there for ever. That He did really ascend thither, that He does really sit at God's right hand in our nature, we have the best evidence we can desire; 1. the evidence of the Apostles, who saw Him ascending; 2. the evidence of the angels, who declared to the Apostles (who were gazing and mourning, like Elisha at the departure of his master) whither He had

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ascended ; 3. above all the evidence of God Himself, who ten days afterwards, on the day of Pentecost, in the presence of men and angels poured out His Spirit upon all flesh, (Joel ii. 28, sent the rod of His strength out of Zion, and made David's Lord ruler in the midst of His enemies from that day to this. (Ps. cx. 2.)

Thither then, even to the right hand of majesty and power, the Saviour of men is gone, to carry on the work of His incarnation and of our redemption. As man He feels for men, sympathizes with them in all their sufferings and infirmities, and feels for all their errors and mistakes that deep, affectionate, and untiring interest in them, which they need in their times of trial. Having been tempted Himself, He succours with hearty zeal, and gentle kindness, them who are tempted. And thus after all His temptation and agony, after all His labours and sorrows, having Himself attained to a place of rest and security and unspeakable happiness, having ascended to that presence, (Ps. xvi. 11,) where is the fulness of joy, and to that right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore, He prepares a place of rest and peace for us ; and, when He has prepared it for us all, He will come again and receive us to Himself, that where He is

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there we may be also, that we also may drink of the river of His pleasures. Had He not gone thither, He could not have prepared it ; had He not prepared it, we could not have been received thither, nor enjoyed rest in the mansion of our Father's house, to which He invites us, when He bids us come unto Him. Were He not man, He could not feel as man for man, and yet, had He not been more than man, nay, more than angel, His ascension, if it could have been, would have been in vain ; for what power, what regal authority, can mere man or angel have in the court of heaven, to prepare mansions in the very presence of God ? As man then, as the representative of man, as our Head, He feels and provides for us His members ; and, in His close and most intimate union with us in His Church, (Eph. iv. 16 ; v. 29, &c.) we have His assurance, that where He is, He will make provision for us to follow. (Heb. vi. 20.) He is entered into the holy place within the veil, as our *forerunner*, heralding our way, cutting down all obstacles that hinder our advancing and following Him, pointing out the way to us, who know it not, and holding out the torch of truth and grace to us in the darkness of our ignorance and wilfulness. Unless there were some to follow, there

such a guide to mount the hill of the
before us.

But, if He is preparing a place for us, we
take care to be ready for the place when
prepared, and be ready at the time when
cometh and calleth us. Can beggars and paupers
be fit to dwell in palaces? Their garments
less suit but ill with the gold and silver
splendour of such sumptuous mansions. .
must change his raiment, ere he can come
Pharaoh and mount the throne of government.
Daniel and his friends must undergo the
years' process of purgation, ere he and his
minister in the Babylonian palace. Esther
be purified and perfumed with oil of myrrour
sweet odours for twelve months ere she

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He prepare for us, we must prepare for Him. We must lift up our hearts, and in good earnest seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God ; not in a childish romantic mysticism, not in a conceited neglect of our daily humble duties, but carrying the melodies of the everlasting chime

“ in our heart

Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying our daily task with busier feet,
Because our secret souls a holy strain repeat.”

We must have clean hands, pure heart, and uncorrupt life, doing the thing that is right, and speaking the truth from the heart. (Ps. xv., xxiv., for the day.) There must be a contempt of the vile person, and an honouring of them that fear the Lord ; no disappointing of our neighbour, when we have sworn to him, though it be to our own hindrance, no taking reward against the innocent. When the banquet is ready, this is the wedding-garment we must have on, or we cannot sit down to it. If the Bridegroom is going to His nuptial supper, we must be ready with vessels filled, and lamps burning, or we shall be surely excluded. When once the door is shut, to knock will be vain, to enter impossible. Nothing will remain but wailing and despair, *nothing* but woe.

we should struggle and fight not merely a flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness in this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, against the wiles and assaults of fiends and acting in ways of which we have no conception nor experience? One purpose of the Lord's ascension to His throne of majesty was to intercede for us, and to assist us in conquering our enemies. "Sit Thou on My right hand," said His heavenly Father, "until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." (Ps. cx. 1 ; Acts i. 9.) As man He feels for us, for our fears and distress, for our reluctance to fight and wrestle, for our shrinking from suffering and toil, from pain and blood. and therefore He is willing and

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clares, that *all* power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth, to assure us that none can resist Him, that if He be for us, it signifies not who is against us. He fights from the citadel of heaven, His arrows are very sharp, and are ready upon His strings against the face of His adversaries however mighty, and with His irresistible weapons He breaketh in pieces the oppressor. He is a thousand fold stronger than the strong man, overcometh him, and taketh from him his armour. He is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and for our consolation is not only King, but Conqueror, conqueror in fiercer battles than ever Joshua or Moses, His types of old, engaged in; conqueror over more furious enemies than ever David His ancestor, the shepherd, prophet, and mighty king of Israel, encountered; conqueror over spiritual enemies, who had conquered us : 1, over Satan, who spoiled us of our birthright in the happy garden ; 2, over sin, that poison plant, which our enemy then sowed in God's field ; 3, and over death, the bitter fruit of sin. Over these He triumphed in His cross and resurrection ; and therefore having triumphed on earth, He is now exercising His power at God's right hand, strengthening our hands in warring, and *training* our fingers in fighting as

the day when He shall come with all His angels to judgment. And yet over His enemies shall His kingdom be exercised *for ever* when their rebellious power and kingdom have been overthrown. Sin shall remain for ever in the reprobate, unwashed out, unforgiven. Satan shall remain, and become eternal in their hearts who have been the willing slaves of sin, and his angels shall remain the executioners of God's righteous vengeance against the wicked and the condemned. And though exalted Lord and Christ shall deliver up His universal kingdom to God even the Father, and all opposing rule, and authority, and power have been put down, He shall still remain exalted for ever, reign with His saints gloriously.

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tain of strength to which we may run, a Refuge of peace to which we may flee, and an Avenger, who will bruise His enemies and ours with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel? Such an avenger did the rebellious and unbelieving Jews find Him in the day of His power, when the Roman eagles kept them in on every side, when they fell by thousands and ten thousands, when the sword and the cross did their fearful work, when the famine and the pestilence thinned their fierce and ghastly numbers in the siege and the straitness, when at last their furious enemies broke in, and the fire destroyed their strong works and their temple, when they were carried captives to all lands, and their loved city and country were given up, as they are to this day, to strangers and idolaters. Such an avenger did heathen and persecuting Rome find Him, for having drunk so deep of the blood of His saints. Though He waited long to give time for a return to thoughts of penitence and faith, yet at last mercy was tired out, He avenged the cruelties and murders inflicted on His martyrs and confessors, and made His enemies lick the dust; He made them as a fiery oven in time of His wrath; He brake the heads of that leviathan in pieces, and gave him to be meat for the people

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in the wilderness, for Alaric and his Goths. Pharaoh and his Egyptian hosts are but types of all such enemies ; and the song of triumph of Moses, that was sung over their perfect overthrow, shall, as St. John tells us, be sung again.

The humble Christian then in every land and age, be his oppressor who or what he may, be the cruelty exercised over body or spirit, be the tyranny he has to bear, carried to want or bonds, to blows or blood, to injury of his good name or his goods, to destruction of his comfort or his life ; what consolation and strength of heart may he not find in His Lord's ascension, in looking up to Him seated in His throne of majesty and power in the heavens ? His Lord looks not down with indifference or neglect upon His persecuted or suffering members. Them, who suffer for Him, i. e. in His cause, or because they are His, He regards as brethren ; in them He suffers ; in all their afflictions He is afflicted ; he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of His eye ; and, though He may delay to judge and avenge, yet in His own time He will recompense tribulation to them, who have troubled His faithful ones, and in the day of His wrath prove to them, that in persecuting them they have persecuted Him. *Before Him let the Christian afflicted or vexed*

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the heart, pour out his sorrows and hardships, let him rely in faith on the arm of his exalted Saviour, for strength and consolation. Let him trust, that He, who still is Man, who, though surrounded by all the glories of heaven, though now circled by adoring myriads of angels, and with the sweet strains of angelic harmonies echoing in His ears, yet was hunted as a partridge on the mountains, and bitterly persecuted in the days of His humiliation by envious and blood-thirsty tyrants having no fear of God before their eyes, will look down upon him in the darkness of sympathy, and will one day exert power for his deliverance, and for the dismay, the confusion, and ruin of his enemies, that power, to which He has been raised at God's own right hand.

But if so, surely there is a lesson of caution to all lest we ourselves be of the number of the enemies of our ascended Lord. "Subject we must be, whether we will or no; but if willingly, there is our service perfect freedom; if unwillingly, there is our averseness everlasting misery. Enemies we all have been; under His feet we all shall be, either adopted or subdued. From His kingdom of power none of us can be excepted; happy are we, if by our obedience we shew our-

all who will live godly in Christ Jesus expect persecution as their portion. We have cares and sorrows ; household cares, care of business, infirmities of the body, wounds and bitterness of the soul, wounds which the Father alone knoweth in solitude ; we have secret and secret griefs, which we can open to no one but One, and which none but One can softly relieve. There is the wife mourning over the coldness or cruelty of her husband, the mother grieving over the wild profligate career of her darling son, the pastor sickened at the obstinacy and rebellion of his flock, the servant galled by the sulky or violent temper of her fellow-servant, the labourer borne down by his unfeeling master who keepeth back his just wages the

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this bitter cup? Remember, there is a Man in heaven, once a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, as thou art, who came down to bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows; and therefore, being still touched with the feeling of our weakness, and having gone through temptations in all points like ours, come to Him, with all boldness, assured, that unless it be thine own fault, thou shalt obtain mercy, and find grace to help thee in time of need. He has commanded us to bring our wants and necessities before Him, to pray to the Father in His name, to ask, and we shall receive, and our joy shall be full. He is our all-prevailing Intercessor. He is our Priest, as the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches us, which speaks so largely of His priesthood. One great office of the Priest is to intercede for the people, one of His high functions foretold in prophecy, viz., "to intercede for the transgressors." If then we draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, and make our requests known with thanksgiving, we are assured that the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Still we must do our part; we must pray, if our Advocate is to offer our prayers. We must

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not be silent in unbelief, nor cease to pray in despondency, pride, or impatience, because our prayers are not heard and answered so soon as we wish or expect. We must pray, and pray on, pray in faith and perseverance too, pray with patience, nothing wavering, watching thereunto without fainting, or our prayer will not reach the ears of our Intercessor, will not pierce the clouds, nor bring down the wished-for blessing. And, while we pray, let not our lives contradict our prayers; while we pray, 'Lead us not into temptation,' let us not lead ourselves; while we pray 'Deliver us from evil,' let us not wilfully expose ourselves to it.

4. Finally, He ascended up on high to give gifts unto men, (Eph. iv. 8; Ps. lxxviii. 18,) to receive them from His heavenly Father in virtue of His all-atoning passion, to give them unto men in assurance of His exaltation and power in heaven, and to advance and perfect His mediatorial kingdom. And what were those gifts? They were gifts of the Holy Ghost, whereby Apostles and prophets, teachers and workers of miracles, were endowed by God with power to heal, to speak His word with new tongues, and to interpret His mind and will. He best knows what gifts our fallen corrupt condition needed, what

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medicines were essential for our healing, and He has not only wisdom to discriminate, but power as well as mercy to give. And why were they given? for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, to bring all to unity of faith, to bring all unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; to bring all, i. e. to the full maturity, solidity, and strength of a perfect membership of Christ; to a lively faith, ripe judgment, and sound knowledge of His will and mysteries; to full sanctity, and participation of His Spirit; in one word, the word of holy prophecy, "that the Lord God might dwell among us." (Ps. lxxviii. 8.) This spiritualizing, purifying, and renewing of our nature is the grand object and purpose of all the economy of His Incarnation. He became Man, to make us the sons of God. In order to make us happy, He would make us holy. Doubtless the consideration of these gifts belongs more properly to Pentecost; but they are the first-fruits of His Ascension, and so cannot be passed by here; they are the evidence to us of the power, to which He is exalted; they are the arguement that His bounty distributes, on mounting His regal throne, on being invested with His kingly robes, on having a crown of pure gold

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set on His head ; (Ps. xxi. 3. *for the day ;*) they are the purchase of His agony, and sweat, and blood ; they are instrumental to our salvation. Without holiness no man can see God, no man can be saved ; but without God's gifts, His gifts of regeneration in Baptism, and of daily-renewing, no man can be holy.

And thus had not our risen Lord vouchsafed to ascend to His throne of grace and power in heaven, and having ascended, had He not graciously prepared a place for us, we must have remained desponding outcasts. Had He not mercifully given us gifts, we must have remained polluted reprobates, unfit and unwilling to enter, even though He had prepared the place of our rest. Did He not intercede for us, our prayers would be vain as the cries of idiots and madmen, and did He not conquer our enemies, make them His footstool, and enable us to conquer, we must have been captives for ever, (Ps. cxxiv. 4,) overwhelmed, as we deserve, by the deep waters of the proud, and the stream of misery and despair going over our soul everlastingly. And so His Gospel, like the infants at Bethlehem, must have been slain as it were in its infancy, and all His teaching, sufferings, miracles and blood had been vain : we

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should yet be in our sins, and our faith as well as our hope but a vapour that vanisheth away.

And now we have followed our Lord from His cradle to His baptism, from His temptation to His betrayal, from His agony to His cross, from His burial to His resurrection, and thence to His ascension, till to us, in spirit at least, as to His chosen ones of old visibly,—

Heaven's bright boundless avenue
Has open'd on our eager view,
And homeward to His Father's throne,
Still lessening, brightening on our sight,
His shadowy car go soaring on ;
We track Him up th' abyss of light.

We read of a soldier pilgrim, that anxiously and with tears visited all the places of the Holy Land, in which our Saviour had been, and at last came to the mount of Olives, whence the Lord ascended to heaven. Then after a long prayer he said, weeping, 'Behold, Lord, I have sought Thee diligently every where, and now that I am come to the place where Thou didst ascend into heaven, where can I seek Thee more? Let my spirit depart, and come unto Thee, that I may see Thee sitting in glory at the right hand of the Father.' And with these words he gave up the ghost without pain. So may we seek the Lord through all

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His works, through all the scenes and events of His life ; so may we in heart and mind ascend into the heavens, and with Him continually dwell.

May we gratefully accept God's gifts, the purchase and fruits of our Saviour's humiliation upon earth, the seal of His atonement and intercession, and the evidence of His glorification in heaven ; may we not despise nor neglect them, nor render ourselves unfit to receive them by our wilfulness or folly, or ignorance of our own needs, of our weakness or corruption ; may we strive to attain to that *perfection* of manhood, that full spiritual stature, which He intends we should reach ; may we be no more children, misled by the cunning craftiness of men, but in genuine sincerity, and thorough love of the truth, in deed, in word, and in heart, grow up in all things unto Him, which is the Head, even Christ ; that, when the end shall come, where He is, thither we His members may also ascend in body and soul, have our perfect consummation and bliss, and reign with Him in glory. Amen.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.


Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

THE SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY.

Action and Contemplation.

THE Festival of our Lord's Ascension closes the series of those in which we commemorate Him alone. Under the guidance of His Church we have in the holy season of Advent waited for His coming, we have stood by the manger at Bethlehem, seen Him obedient to the law for man, followed with the wise men the guiding of His star, have beheld Him presented in the temple, heard Him in the same temple questioning the elders; we have contemplated the mystery of His temptation, witnessed His agony, stood by His cross, welcomed Him risen, and finally lost Him in the clouds of heaven. And now the cycle is completed, and we enter upon a long season during which we commemorate Him specially no more.

Seeking then guidance and direction for our minds during this season, listening as it were



This same Jesus, which is taken up into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." So read, was the remonstrance with which he broke in upon the mute and entranced amazement of the Apostles, as they were still steadfastly up into heaven, following with unseeing eyes the track by which their Divine Lord had passed into its innermost depths.

And yet we cannot suppose that they were to rebuke them for their earnest gazing. If ever there was a time when devout ecstasies were natural, to these men and at this time it was especially. Let us strive for a moment to picture to ourselves somewhat of the intensity of their feelings.

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of the living, and, as they thought, lost to them for ever. On that darkness had dawned the brightness of the Resurrection; heaviness had endured for a night, but joy came in the morning when it was declared to them, in words which long formed the greeting of Christians to one another upon the Easter festival, "The Lord is risen indeed." To all He had shewed Himself alive by many infallible proofs, being seen of them during those forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God; that Kingdom which He had died to raise upon its only and sure foundation, but to complete which was to be their task, aided by that Gift, the promise of the Father, which should soon descend upon them, which they had heard of Him. So soon as He had ended His declaration of the work they were to perform, and the help which they should have in its performance, while they beheld He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Here then was an end of all their doubts. When He first appeared after His Resurrection some had doubted, but who could doubt now? Now must have burst upon their minds in all its fulness the awful truth that to them had been vouchsafed daily to converse familiarly with

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the Son of God, and from His own lips to receive the words of eternal wisdom and truth. Now too must they have first felt the greatness of the blessing they had lost : though they had known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth they were to know Him thus no more : all that now remained to them was to dwell upon the unspeakably precious memory of the past, and by faith, keen and lively faith, to realize His parting promise, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

And as they gazed on the bright cloud which hid from their eyes their ascending Lord, how could they but reach forward in hope to that time when they too should rise from earth to take possession for ever of those houses not built with hands, eternal in the heavens, which they knew, for He had told them, He was gone to prepare for them.

Surely I say the angels could not mean to rebuke them for their earnest gazing, but to remind them that it must have an end ; that the natural feelings of awe, admiration, and regret once indulged, they must descend into the world of stern practical realities, where more pressing duties awaited them.

And a like lesson do their words convey to us.

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There is none in the whole course of Christian festivals, on which we in our poor measure may more lawfully indulge in pious contemplation ; not one on which we may more profitably strive to raise our thoughts from the concerns of earth, and for a while in heart and mind thither ascend where Christ the fore-runner is for us entered. We should indeed do well to imitate the Apostles in their earnest gazing up into heaven : to strive to bring home to our minds the glory and exaltation of our incarnate Lord, the first-born among many brethren, because to do so is not only a sign of our real love to Him, but also a special means, under God's blessing, of deepening and strengthening that love into an active principle of duty.

By many of us it is to be feared this warning of the angels is too little needed ; few among us cultivate, as we might and ought, the habit of meditation upon spiritual things ; an earthborn mist of worldly thoughts and cares, not a cloud lighted up with heavenly glory comes between us and our ascending Saviour ; we do not gaze stedfastly up into heaven. To some indeed the danger is different ; some may deceive themselves, and mistake an excitable temper of mind for real devotion : some there are in whom

imagination is lively and strong, and who find no difficulty in employing it upon subjects of this nature, till they believe themselves lifted far above earth and its interests, and these are but too apt to put their feelings in the place of practical every-day religion.

But in proportion as we either really advance in the practice of religious meditation, or fancy ourselves to have done so, we do greatly need the instruction conveyed in the angels' remonstrance: "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? a task is set you: your Master has left you a work to accomplish. He hath finished the work which the Father gave Him to do, and hath entered into His rest. Hath He not also told you what proof of your love He will accept and own: 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments?' This same Jesus which is taken up into heaven, shall come once more in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven. As He declared to the merciless Judge, 'Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' Let then the thought of that time, when He will surely demand an account of the work which He hath left in your hands, rouse you from your trance and recal you to the realities of your go-

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sition ; the world, He hath forewarned you, will hate you and persecute you : be ye faithful and true, and ye shall indeed enter into His kingdom : but it must be through much tribulation ; and ‘ whoso overcometh, to him shall be given a crown of life.’ ”

How the Apostles received and obeyed this charge, the Scriptures are their witness. “ They worshipped Him,” says St. Luke, “ and returned to Jerusalem with great joy ;” with the joy we may believe of men to whom has been granted a clear view of duty and the promise of Divine aid in performing it : a joy chastened, doubtless, by human feelings of bereavement, yet a joy sure and certain as resting upon the support of humble faith : and when they were come in, they went into an upper room, and continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, those weaker vessels whom faith and love had made strong, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, her through whose soul the sword had so lately pierced, and with His brethren. Next, having with prayer to God chosen one to fill the vacant place from which Judas had by transgression fallen, and to be with them a witness of all those things which they were to publish throughout *the world*, they waited in faith and patience

for the coming of that Comforter whom their Lord had promised.

This then is the lesson which the example of the Apostles teaches : first, holy contemplation of divine things, then calm self-collected earnest prayer for divine grace, and then to go forth to the scene of our actual trial, to reduce to practice in our journey through the wilderness of this world those things which have been shewed us in the Mount of God. And so on the Sunday following the festival of the Ascension, we have brought before us the exhortation of St. Peter to diligence in our several callings, and the solemn warning which our Lord gave to His disciples of the nature of the task which lay before them ; a warning to which we cannot but think that their minds must have recurred, as at this time, in the short interval of calm tranquillity which was granted to them ere they girt on the whole armour of God, and set forward to their life-long battle.

Ours too is the same watch-word, " This same Jesus shall so come : " this is the link which connects the end of our commemorations of the Saviour with the beginning of them : this is the note of warning which, when our faith languishes, and our love grows cold, shall rouse and re-ani-

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mate us. If at any time we be sore let and hindered in running the race which is set before us, and our hearts are growing faint and our limbs weary, these same words shall give us strength: "this same Jesus shall in like manner come again." Now therefore and ever until He so come, He liveth to make intercession for us. Seated at the right hand of God, He is ever pleading the merits of His sacrifice for the pardon of all true penitents; over the imperfection of their services He casts the mantle of His perfect righteousness, and they are accepted in the Beloved.

Meanwhile He hath not left us comfortless; to His own disciples, when at the thought of losing His presence, sorrow had filled their hearts, He declared that it was expedient for them that He should go away, since otherwise the Comforter should not come: by His own appointment, Christ's absence from us in the flesh is the pledge of His presence with us by the Holy Spirit; this our joy therefore is fulfilled; this is the light which, shining through the tears of separation, sets in the heavens the bow of promise, the pledge of pardon and of safety. Rightly then at this season do we unite the memory of our Lord's Ascension with the

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prayer of humble hope, that on us too may be poured out that Holy Spirit, Who proceeding from the Father and the Son, sanctifies the elect people of God, making to them clean hearts and renewing in them a right spirit, so that they who were once bond-slaves to Satan, carnal, sold under sin, are delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God. "This same Jesus shall in like manner come again," but not alone, for "them also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him. The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up, together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Such was the hope which under all trials sustained the holy Apostles. Animated by this, St. Paul could calmly cast all his care upon God, and walk stedfastly in the path of duty, though upon the future was cast only so much of light as served to disclose its dangers: not knowing the things that should befall him, save that the Holy Ghost witnessed in every city that bonds and afflictions awaited him, he still reckoned

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that the sufferings of the time then present, were not worthy to be compared with the glory that should be revealed.

But he that hath this hope purifieth himself : death and the resurrection are not gifted with power to change our hearts : then will the sentence be, “ He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still ; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still ; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” Life is given us to work in, grace to work with. Doubtless the highest degrees of holiness we can attain here, are as nothing compared with that perfect holiness which shall in heaven clothe those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and are thenceforward clothed in clean linen fine and white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten it ; still if the work is to be perfected there, it must be begun here : we cannot live here taken up with the things of this world, and hope to wake in eternity with the love of the next.

Ever remembering then, that though the Apostles of Christ alone were privileged to behold His ascension, yet when He shall in like manner come again, every eye shall see Him ; that they shall behold Him with the eyes of

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their body who have long beheld Him with the eyes of their faith ; but that they too must look on Him who have pierced and crucified Him afresh by turning from His promises, disregarding His threatenings, or going dreamily through life as though after death there were no judgment to follow ;—ever remembering these things, be it our earnest endeavour to imitate the example of the Apostles at this season brought before us : cheerfully let us obey the Voice which summons us to the work of our calling, and so diligently pursue it while it is yet day, that when our Lord shall so come again we may be found in Him, **not having our own righteousness but that which is of God by faith. Let our citizenship be in heaven, seeing that from thence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.**

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

WHIT-SUNDAY.

The coming and comfort of the Holy Ghost.

It was good for us that Christ should come ; very good for us that He should come down from heaven to save us from our sins. It was also good that after He had finished His work on earth He should return to His Father and to the right hand of the throne of God. He says Himself that it was not only good as regards Himself to ascend into heaven, but that it was for our good. "It is expedient for you that I go away," and He explains the point very clearly in the words that follow, "for," He adds, "if I go not away, the Comforter will not come : but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

But had not Christ been a Comforter ? Yes, truly, the best that had ever been, the greatest and the truest. Never had there been seen in the world such a Guide, such a Friend, such a Master, such a Giver of true consolation, such a

Comforter. The best of the sons of consolation were not worthy so much as to unloose the latchet of His shoes, Who spake as never man spake, and Who stood crying in the wilderness of this groaning and afflicted world, "Come unto Me all ye that labour, and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

So deeply had those who sought Him felt the power of His consolation, the greatness of the peace and love which issued from Him abundantly, that the mere mention of His departure filled them with sorrow. "Because I have said these things unto you," as He Himself bears witness, "sorrow hath filled your heart." They could scarce bear the thought that He was about to go; it was like losing the very Sun and Light of their souls. They had left all to follow Him; and when the tidings came from His own lips that He was about to leave them, their hearts sank within them, and their grief was great. The Church seemed to them without Him, as a bride forsaken by her husband, as a household without its master, as a besieged army without its captain, as a flock without its shepherd, as a

family without its head. And yet He said, "it is expedient for you that I go away." Where was the good to lose Christ, Whom it was worth all the world to gain? Who could be like Him or supply His place?

Or did He mean, that when He went the great sorrows of the Church would cease, and so, with the sorrow, the need of a great comforter? Did He mean that the company of believers were to be freed from all the temporal tribulations which afflict the sons of men, the instant He ascended up into heaven? Nay, Christ Himself spoke plainly enough on this point. His own words, to say nothing of the immediate experience of His followers, took away all hope of the undoing of the burden of earthly trouble. "In the world ye shall have tribulation," was a sentence that could not be mistaken. Tribulation then is still the portion of believers; and more than this, there are some sorrows, some harassments that come upon us because we are believers, as especial trials of faith, that would not come upon us, except we believed in Christ.

How then was it good for us that Christ should go? It was expedient for us in this way. First, because He went to prepare a place for us in heaven; "I go to prepare a place for you—

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that where I am, there ye may be also ; next, because He went to add another work of love to His former work, I mean, the gracious work of constant intercession with the Father ; and lastly, because He went in order that He might send another Comforter. But you may say that there may be many comforters, yet not such a one as Christ ; we may have another, and yet one not equal to Christ, either in love or in the power of comforting ; but if Christ said it was expedient for us that He should go away, in order that we might enjoy the presence of an abiding Comforter, we have proof in this very statement, that we were to have not simply another comforter, but one equal to Himself, one not inferior in any way, and superior in this respect, that He would abide continually with the Church even unto the end of the world. He tells us who this is ; it is no less a one than “ the Spirit of truth,” God the Holy Ghost. This saying of Christ, is proof enough that the Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and the Son ; else surely it would not have been good for us to have lost Christ. Nay, as He sends to us the Holy Ghost to be our Guide, we keep Christ while we lose Him, for He is one with the Spirit ; and hence, though He said, “ I go to the Father,” and then went, He also

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said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Unspeakable indeed would have been the loss of Christ's bodily presence, if any other than God the Holy Ghost had come. Though we deserve not this Presence, we need it. With less than this, how could we keep the faith at all, or live at all as men of faith? With all the power of sin and all the wiles of the devil, and all the strength of lust and all the baits of the world, and all the sicknesses of the flesh, and all the spiritual fears which crowd upon us in various and changing forms as we move through life, how could we of ourselves sustain the fight? Prosperity, adversity, smooth times, rough times, hardship, ease, riches, poverty, sickness, health, all these are states of temptation; all these are trials of the soul; and those which we are the least apt to reckon among trials are in truth oftentimes the most fearful and the worst of all, both because of the natural tendencies of the things themselves, and because we are not enough suspicious of the sting they carry; such are the states of prosperity, worldly ease, comfortable circumstances, good health, a calm life with no more than the shadow of a few summer clouds crossing it at times.

Left to ourselves, we could in no wise go through these trials by our own sufficiency, since we are born in sin, and have yielded to actual sin. When we are rich, we are tempted to be proud and fond of pomp, to plume ourselves on our consequence, to like show or flattery or over many dainties of meat and drink and dress: when we are poor, we are tempted to murmur at our lot, to speak impatient words against the providence of God, or to have impatient thoughts: when we are well and strong, we are tempted to abuse our health, to take it as a matter of course, to be unthankful, to put off the concerns of the soul on the very ground that we are young and strong, as though religion were the business only of the sickly and the dying, who cannot serve the world nor take their pleasure; when we are sick, we are tempted to become peevish and taken up with ourselves. These are the temptations that surround us in the various changes and chances of this mortal life; and we should all fall, we should all yield to the strength of sin, unless we had a Divine Comforter. Blessed therefore is the memory of that Feast of Pentecost which fell as on this day, when a Divine Comforter came down to strengthen the hearts of the first disciples, and to continue with the Church till

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the second appearing of our Lord from heaven. The promise of Christ was on this day fulfilled. He had gone and the disciples were alone. For a few days they were as men expecting their Great Guest and Guide and Friend. They waited, as men should wait, in hope, in love, in peace one with another. They clung together all the closer, and their very trials tightened the cords of love. Their common love of Christ united them in love for each other; and it was in one of their peaceful meetings, when they were joined together as one little family or household of faith, that the Holy Ghost, the ever-blessed Spirit, came down with wonderful gifts. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Thus is the wonderful scene of the descent of the Holy Ghost described.

Most blessed day for all who seek to be saved

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through Jesus Christ, and desire strength to follow Christ through the thorny path of faith! Most blessed day for all who are called upon to suffer trouble and are visited with affliction! Look back, ye followers of Christ, to that bright sunrise as it were of the day of spiritual gifts. See in that little company of faithful men, that band of brothers, "the first-fruits of the Spirit;" yes, "the first-fruits," not the last. We are called to taste His later gifts; we are called to bring forth in these latter days the fruits of the Spirit, through the operations of the self-same Spirit who is at work in the members of Christ. Very good was it for those first disciples that Christ went; very good is it for us also; for now we have both Christ and the Spirit, Christ interceding for us in heaven, the Holy Ghost succouring and comforting us on earth. The more we consider our own weakness, our own evil will, our natural love of the world and of worldly things, the more will our hearts be lifted up with a deep and joyful thankfulness, as we consider the coming and the continuing Presence of the Holy Ghost. And we shall be more deeply impressed with the value of this blessed Presence of the Spirit, when we look farther than ourselves and our own weakness, when we take deeper insight

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into the spiritual world, and see the very fearful elements of evil that strive to sway and act upon our evil will. There is a great Evil Spirit roaming through the world to make prey of souls; his great enemy is not an open one; he does not stand before us in his own shape; he moves about us like the wind; he is not seen with the eye, nor can his movements be watched, nor his comings and goings; he is secret and invisible, able to influence the thoughts and intents of the heart, secretly giving us notions of sin which we should not have had but for him, heightening our own evil desires, fanning every little spark of sin into a flame, hiding himself like a snake in the grass, yet working death so much the more, tempting us through other men, through outward objects placed in our way, making sin easy and pleasant, giving us opportunities, luring us on by little and little, whispering delays where feelings of repentance are stirred within us, suggesting worldly idle thoughts when our spirit inclines to pray and when we kneel down. O that a great war is within us and without! With that great wiles is Satan at work in his endeavour to destroy our souls! What are we by ourselves? How can we keep our feet or stem the strong rushing tide of temptation that sweeps

against us? how by our own strength can we keep our hold of the Cross of Christ?

We must take into account not only our own sinfulness, but these great wiles of the devil, before we can appreciate in any degree the value of the succour of the Holy Ghost. As we have a great Evil Spirit ever plotting against us and attacking us, so we need the Good Spirit of God to blunt those fiery darts, and to beat down with His stronger arm the invisible sword of the prince of darkness. We want the Holy Spirit to sway the thoughts and intents of our hearts for good, to keep down evil imaginations and to suggest good, to give us opportunities for doing good and to throw good men in our way, to lead us on by little and little along the narrow way of Christian obedience, to incline us to pray and to give us collectedness when we pray, to move us to repentance when we have sinned, to give depth and continuance to our repentance when we have begun to repent, to soften our hearts when we are prosperous, to humble us when all men speak well of us, to give us patience in time of adversity, and heavenly consolations in seasons of anguish and distress.

With no less a Comforter, no less a Guide, no

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less a Counsellor, could we hold our hearts on high above the waters of the world; for even with all this help of the Holy Ghost, who is greater "than he that is in the world," greater than the prince of this world, we find it hard to keep with Christ, hard to return when we have erred and strayed from His ways, hard to acquire habits of holiness, hard to undo and disentangle ourselves of habits of sin. A multitude of evil, unchaste, selfish, uncharitable or worldly thoughts, are ever ready to fill the whole house of the inner man as with an armed host, to people every avenue and secret passage of the heart, and to carry us away from God. A multitude of evil spirits are besetting us all the day, coming to us in our walks, our labours, our amusements, our trade, our places of business, our places of leisure, first trying one plan to entice us, and, if that fails, then another, sometimes coming for a moment with a slight suggestion of sin, then staying longer with us and giving the suggestion a bolder shape, now dropping the seed of evil into the soul, now coming to water the seed sown. Thus are we surrounded by evil powers, even though we have the comfort and the aid of the Spirit of grace. What should we do had we a lesser Comforter,

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a weaker Friend, or one who only at times could come to give us aid ?

“ Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift ! ” thanks be to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us, His weak wayward children, so divine a gift as the presence of the Spirit ! Thanks be to our Lord Jesus Christ, in that He ascended up on high and led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men ! For “ every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,” and all the diversity of spiritual gifts that aid us in our way to heaven, are the operations of one and the self-same Spirit, Who is Himself the great Gift sent to us by Christ Jesus our Lord from heaven. He it is, Who is the Author and the Finisher of every thing that is good in us. He it is, Who made Apostles preach and gave their words power, and sent prophets and taught disciples, and wrought miracles and spread the faith. He it is, Who has given us the example of martyrs and the patterns of saints, and the writings of good men, and spiritual songs with sweet psalms, and moved men to build churches, and sent pastors, and gathered flocks, and preserved sound doctrine. He it is, Who inspired prophets and evangelists, and now keeps their words, and

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makes them effectual to the saving of souls. He it is, Who comforts mourners and lifts up the widow's heart, and consoles the fatherless and befriends the friendless, and abides with the lonely and the desolate. He it is, Who has given us all the good desires we have ever had, brought us to ourselves when we have done wrong, begun in us all our repentances, assisted us in all our offices of kindness towards our brethren, or put it into the hearts of our brethren to be kind towards us, visited us in our affliction, and brought good out of evil. He it is, Who has gone before us and led us on to all the good we ever designed to do, and helped us in all the good we ever did, and made us finish whatever good we took in hand, and given us all the sense of sin we ever felt, all the charity we have ever exercised, all the faith we have ever shewn, all our moderation in prosperous times, all our patience in time of trouble. He it is, Who is now ready to go before us, to go with us, to be behind us, pressing us on, to be on all sides of us, as we desire to walk on the heavenward road, ever willing to help the selfish to be unselfish, the angry to conquer anger, the covetous to be liberal, the divided to be at one again, the harsh to be gentle, the intemperate to refrain

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from strong drink, the lustful to be chaste, the foolish to be wise, the worldly to give up the world.

O good Spirit of God, O most gracious Guide, O blessed Comforter of our souls, shew us the way and lead Thou us on ; guide Thou our feet into the way of peace ; we desire to follow Thee and to learn of Thee ; Thou art our Friend and hast come down from heaven to take charge of Christ's flock. We are Christ's ; we are Thine ; we desire more and more to be Christ's, more and more to be Thine ; we give ourselves into Thine hand afresh this day on which Thou didst first descend on the first disciples. Come among us at this time and succour us. Come among us and lead us onward to all holy living, all holy conversation, all ways of godliness, all pure thoughts, all good counsels and good works, that we may at last reach the heavenly places where Christ is, and may be with Him for ever.

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DEVOTION.

O God, who didst as on this day send the Holy Ghost the Comforter, with manifold gifts of grace, we bless Thee for Thy great love towards us, and Thy great compassion towards us who, by reason of our weakness, cannot stand upright nor fulfil Thy will.

Continue, most merciful Father, to succour us ; continue to bestow upon us the gift of the Spirit, that He may abide with us in our life and in our death, in the hour of wealth and the hour of poverty, in our brighter and in our darker days, that no temptation within or without may separate us from Thee, nor sever us from the true vine into which we have already been engrafted. Without the succour of the Spirit we cannot think or do any thing that is good ; we cannot bear the assaults of the evil one, nor conquer our own carnal will, which doth strive for the mastery even in the regenerate. We need continual supplies of grace, that we may continually confess the faith in this evil world, and may be kept from the evil of the world. We stand, O Lord, in a slippery place, and our foot is ready to slip, unless by Divine help we are held up. O hold Thou up

our goings in Thy ways, that our footsteps slip not. We fly to Thee for help, and acknowledge that without Thee we cannot but fall. Hear us on this day, good Lord, and increase in us Thy good gifts. We desire the comfort of the One true Comforter. We desire to be sanctified wholly that we may keep Thy commandments, and not be unfruitful members of Thy Holy Church. We have no strength of ourselves, no constancy, no power to resist sin, no steadfastness. We are easily beset and easily overcome. We have no weapons of our own for the great war in which we are engaged ; we look to Thee for help.

O gracious Father, hear us for Thy Son's sake. Enlighten us with Divine light ; strengthen us with Divine strength ; make us wise in Divine wisdom ; direct us with Divine counsel ; comfort us with Divine comfort. We pray Thee to be with us at all times and in all places. We pray Thee to assist us with the Spirit in all times of trial, that we may continue Thine for ever. Visit us with Thy salvation. O visit us while we are on earth, that we may be at last raised up into the heavenly house for Jesus Christ's sake.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

MONDAY IN WHITSUN-WEEK.

The gift of the Holy Ghost in Baptism.

To the eye, to the sight, to the bodily senses, Holy Baptism is but a form. The font, the water, the clergyman, and the child, these you see and nothing beside these ; hence in the outward appearance of Baptism there is nothing marvellous to amaze the eye.

There is no voice from heaven, no cloven tongues as of fire, no visible glory in the Church, no bright light breaking over the font, no great lustre passing over the face of the baptized, no dazzling token of God's presence. The font, the clergyman, the water, and the child, all look as they are wont to look at any other time on any other day ; in none of these things is any outward change to be discerned ; and he who only sees with his fleshly eye is not awe-struck, is not affected, is not filled with overpowering thoughts of the presence of the Spirit, when he sees the

water poured upon the child, and hears the words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

But if we see with the inward eye, and hear with the inward ear, and gaze into the inward part of the outward act with the penetrating vision of a trustful soul, all is changed. By faith we see the Holy Ghost descending like a dove and lighting upon the baptized; by faith we hear, as it were, the rustling of the wings of the Dove "that is covered with silver wings, and her feathers like gold;" by faith we look through the outward form and see wonderful operations of the Spirit of grace; by faith we behold a child of wrath transformed into a child of God, a soul quickened that was dead, a soul new-born unto God that was born in sin, a body sanctified and consecrated by the Spirit that was under the power of the devil and an unholy will, a house of dust turned into a temple of the Holy Ghost, a tabernacle of death changed into an abode of the Spirit of God.

O great change wrought by the Spirit for those who are baptized! great change wrought in you, in your body and in your soul, when you were baptized, however you may be acting, however you may be living now, whether you are still

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walking after the spirit in newness of life, or falling back into the power of sin. Think not that your Baptism was a form. Far more was done for you and in you than met the eye. That washing of water was a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness. It pleased God the Holy Ghost to come and visit you. He came, not as a guest that tarrieth but a day, nor "as a post that hasteth by," but to make His abode with you, to dwell with you all the days of your life, to keep you always from the evil spirits that are abroad, to be your inward Guide and Friend, the lantern of your feet, the indwelling light of your soul, as long as you would obey His voice and receive His counsel. He then wrested you out of Satan's hands, whose you were, and took possession of you, that you might be His everlasting possession, His own in this world, His own in the next.

You may not have thought of all this grace which visited you in Baptism ; yet as our Saviour said, "except a man be born again born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," so He graciously vouchsafed to you this very new birth. He granted you of His grace this very thing, this spiritual regeneration, *without which* you could have no power to

see Christ now, nor be received by Him hereafter. There may be many Naamans around you at this day, in Naaman's first mood of unbelief, who may ask, "what can water do for the soul? what is Baptism but a form?" But give no heed to them; or ask them in your turn, "what could water do in curing a leprosy? what was washing in Jordan but a useless form?" Water can do nothing of itself; that is true: it can neither cure leprosy, nor drown sins. Yet Naaman washed and was clean; and Ananias bade St. Paul "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." In either case what did the water do? where was the power or virtue of it either for the body or the soul? God was at work in both; God made the water cure leprosy and wash away sin. He used it as a channel of His grace.

He seems of design to choose simple things for the conveyance of His grace. It is as easy for Him to convey His Spirit through water, as by an angel's mouth, or by a prophet's, or by a preacher's; it is God that "worketh all in all." Water, and bread and wine, and laying on of hands, these are the plain and simple things through which He works, in order that we may more clearly see and confess Him in what is

done, in order that we may more entirely believe in His power. Had we greater things flashing with visible marvels before our eyes, we might honour the marvellous gift and forget the Giver ; but now "the excellency of the power" is evidently of God and not of man.

See then in Holy Baptism not water only, but a mystical union both of water and of the Spirit. Believe that the font was the cradle of your new birth, that in baptism you died unto sin and were buried, that you had new life given to you, the new birth unto righteousness. This the Bible teaches ; this the Prayer-book teaches ; this the Church teaches in all her services and in all the writings of her best and most learned men. Though I cannot give you in this tract all the passages either of the Bible or of the Prayer-book which assert this truth, yet just weigh and digest with a teachable and truth-seeking mind a few texts which I will string together for your use. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death ? Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death." "Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised *Him* from the dead. And you being

dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven all trespasses. According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration." "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."

Now let us just take the last of these texts, for it is very short and very plain. "By one *Spirit*," mark those words first, "are we *all*,"—not some, not a few,—but "all *baptized*;" here are water and the Spirit linked together, as in Christ's words, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit;" and last of all come the words, "into one body," the body of Christ. Surely this text shews in the plainest, strongest way a very close union between Christ and us who are baptized; and it also tells us that by Baptism we got this union; the union then began; Baptism was the act of uniting us; we became by that means a part of Christ's body, the Church, and therefore a part of Christ Himself, who is the Head of the body; we became as it were limbs or members of Christ. If you turn to the trees of the field, you will see an act done in them just like that which is done in us; you will see the living part of a tree taken from its own parent tree and be-

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oming an adopted child of another tree. What baptism does for us, grafting does for the sprout of the tree ; the act of grafting incorporates the hoot of one tree into the stock or body of another. The grafted tree in your orchard or your garden shews you how Christ has made you a part of Himself, how He has united you to Himself, how He pours into you His Spirit, and sends the sap of His grace into your soul. By Baptism we are taken from our parent tree which is full of sin ; we are no more children of wrath ; we are cut off from that root of bitterness ; we are ingrafted into the true Vine, which gives us of the riches and fulness of its juice ; we drink in new life therefrom ; we become branches of the true tree of life ; we are Christ's and Christ is ours ; we are not only adopted children of God, but spiritually incorporated, grafted into the mystical body of Christ's Church, " partakers of the Divine nature." Confess now that God the Holy Ghost, through the blessed Sacrament of Baptism, has done great things for your soul, and has wrought a great change in your condition.

But you may say, "How can we be born of God in Baptism when I see so many who have been baptized leading ungodly and even profligate lives? How can they have ever received the

Spirit?" This is a natural question for you to ask, and I will answer it from St. Paul. If you remember, of the Corinthian Church he said, "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body;" and if you examine the same Epistle you will find these same Corinthians marked with most dreadful sins committed after Baptism. And how does St. Paul speak? does he say to these evil-doers of the Church, "you have never received the Spirit; you were not baptized by one Spirit; you were not new-born; you cannot have been born of the Spirit?" he says no such thing; nay, he says just the contrary; he bids them remember that they *have* been filled with the Spirit, that they *have* received it, that theirs is the greater sin, and theirs must be the quicker, the deeper repentance, because of their possession of the Spirit. "What!" he cries out, "know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God?" So he speaks to the covetous and drunken and adulterous members of the Corinthian Church. Therefore so must we speak to the covetous and drunken and adulterous members of our Church. We must not say, they have never received the Spirit, that their Baptism was a form; but on the contrary we must assert the increased heinousness of their guilt from the very fact that by

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Baptism they became temples of the Holy Ghost, whom they very greatly grieve and very fearfully resist.

Do not think that because we are made children of God and ingrafted into Christ so as to drink of His Spirit, that we cannot be separated from Christ, that our life cannot depart from us, nor the Spirit be quenched. Cannot the graft be broken off from its new parent and cast upon the ground to die, if it is not watched at first? may not a rough wind or the rough hand of a passer by tear it off? even when it has become quite set in the stock, can it not be wrenched away if there is no watch kept, and if the cattle of the field are suffered to press themselves against it? The longer it stays, the longer of course it is likely to stay; just as a child religiously trained, religiously brought up to manhood, is less *likely* after religious *habits* have been formed to fall into a course of sin, though after all it is *possible* for such a one to fall. Or again, when a child is born, can it not die? must it of necessity continue to live, because it now lives? if it be not nourished with right food in right proportion, will it not die? Or if the child is nourished rightly till it becomes a man, will it live without *nourishment*, or will it thrive upon infants?

food? Well then, except the babe in Christ, except the soul new-born of water and of the Spirit be rightly nourished with pure milk of the Word, the spiritual life of the child of God will depart; the spiritual pulse will cease to beat. Or if the babe in Christ become a man in Christ, except the man continues to seek the means of grace and takes the strong meat of the Church suitable to the man, even he will fall away and fade; his spiritual strength will decline and droop; it will altogether depart, unless there be by God's mercy some great renewings of the Holy Ghost. If we cease to watch and pray, we may be sure that the devil and our own reviving lusts will separate us from Christ; for as our Prayer-book so well teaches, "the infection of nature," some of the sap and life of the old tree, of the old Adam, "doth remain even in the regenerate." There must be a constant dying unto sin, the prolonged act of a continuing death.

Yes, if you rightly hold the doctrine concerning Baptism, you will not think it a thing past and done, nor treat it as something that is "over," something no more to be thought of; but you will consider it as the beginning of one long act of dying unto sin stretched out to the very latest hour of your life; you will connect all the parts

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of your life with this beginning ; you will not separate your present life from your Baptism ; it will all be one life. All the good done will be through the motions of that Spirit which then first quickened you ; all the sins committed are acts of despite done to the Spirit which is in you, suicidal acts, if I may so speak, acts contrary to your new nature, your better life, your new and better self, acts which help to choke up the sap which began to flow into your soul at Baptism, which make you an unfruitful branch, which endanger your union with Christ.

In thus seeing and confessing what Baptism really is, we also see what is laid on us by God therein, what duties spring from our new-birth, what course of life we have to lead to make our life of a piece, to make the middle and latter parts fit in with the beginning ; we see the duty of continuing as we began, and the inconsistency of laying the foundation of a house in stone and finishing it with reeds and straw, of beginning with gold and ending with clay. When we really and deliberately consider within ourselves that we were made "*members of Christ*," members of the body of the most pure, most holy Jesus, parts of Him in whom was no sin, grafts of that *Tree of Life*, that living eternal Vine, then

we cannot but feel that we are called by the Spirit to a very strict and very pure and very holy life. To be members of Christ in truth and in reality, can be no mere form : the sinfulness of sin seems to be doubled, to be trebled in those that by Baptism are grafted into Him ; for what is this spiritual engrafting designed to do, except to enable us to bear the fruits of the Spirit, to bring forth grapes, to be fruitful in good works, to shew forth the reality and the value of our union with Christ by the purity of our thoughts and lives?

Only consider the truth of our membership with Christ, of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, and we see how fearful a thing it must be to let evil thoughts come in or to put our hands to sin. Members of Christ ! what have they to do with the works of the devil or of the world ? Should the feet which belong to Christ love to tread the places of gay revelling, of frivolous pleasure ? Should the tongue which belongs to Christ love vain jesting or angry words ? Should the hands which belong to Christ be greedy to get gain and clutch covetously at money ? Should the eyes which belong to Christ be dazzled by show and outward appearance of things and dress and luxury ? Put the case in this way to yourselves ; judge yourself as you would judge a member

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of Christ; consider the things naturally fitting, naturally suitable to a member of Christ. This will enable you to see what your duty is, what manner of life you should lead, what thoughts you should cherish, what objects you should love. Say to yourself, "I am a part of Christ;" always think of yourself as a graft inserted into the mystical body of Christ, as a new creature in Christ Jesus, as one born again. This is your real condition; therefore forget not the state into which you have been called; continually ask yourself whether you are loving what a member of Christ should love, or resisting what a member of Christ should resist. Measure your loves, your hatreds, your desires, your pursuits, by the most pure law of Christ, in order that you may not love what Christ hates or hate what Christ loves. Your calling is holy; walk worthy of the vocation; be a fruitful branch, a good and healthful limb, working that which is good; take not the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot, nor let them commit thefts, nor wound adversaries, nor toil in trifles, nor sport with shadows, nor gather dust. Separate yourself from the world; wrench your affections from visible things, that you may not be separated from Christ.

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But what is to be done, you may ask, if after Baptism you have resisted the Spirit in a long course of careless life, if you have spent a careless youth or fallen into worldly or wicked ways? You have indeed in such a case a hard but not a hopeless task. You have a hard task of very deep repentance; you have most earnestly to implore some gracious renewings of the Holy Ghost; you have to hate yourself for your grievings of the Spirit, for your wanderings from Christ. Like St. Peter, go out and weep bitterly; like Mary Magdalene, stand as it were at Jesus' feet, and wash them with your repentant tears; like David, confess that you have sinned; like the publican, beat upon your breast and say, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner;" like the prodigal, arise and go to your Father, and desire a servant's place in His house, and count yourself unworthy to be called His son. In great self-abasement, in sincere sorrow, in deep and unaffected shame, bow yourself before the throne of grace. Devote yourself afresh to God; cast yourself upon His mercy; endeavour by most devoted service to recover the grace of God, to draw down the pity of your Lord, and to move Him to open out by His Spirit the channel of grace which you had choked up. This do; this is all that you can

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do ; God may accept this, though a broken heart be but a worthless gift in itself ; He has spoken gracious words to penitents. Only number yourself among penitents, and then there is hope. You may yet be lifted up ; you may yet be aided in rising from your sins ; you may yet be succoured by the Spirit in attempts to bring forth fruits meet for repentance ; you may yet be saved, for your Saviour has not yet passed from the throne of grace to the throne of judgment. Haste then in hope, in trust, in self-accusation, to the mercy-seat of God, that you may be forgiven and restored through the merits of your Saviour Jesus Christ.

But O ye young, whose robes are not yet deeply stained with sin, remember your Creator, your Redeemer, your Sanctifier, in the days of your youth. Go not forth into the ways of riotous living ; despise not the Spirit which is in you ; you are called by Christ to spend a holy youth, and a holy youth is a thing lovely in God's eyes. Refrain your feet from frivolous thoughtless ways, above all from the ways of guilty pleasure and lusts that drown the soul. O sow not to yourselves, for the sake of a few brief pleasures, a harvest of future woe. Trust not your *souls* to the evil spirit in your youth,

when the Holy Spirit has chosen you to be His for your good. I pray you, cast not away your youth; defile it not; waste it not; but honour God in the days of your strength and health; give Him the best of your life, and think not to satisfy Him with the dregs of the cup; offer up this very day, at this holy time, some such prayer as this.

O Almighty God, who hast called us to be Thy sons, and hast given unto us the Spirit of adoption, we pray Thee to sanctify us wholly with Thy Spirit; enable us to walk in newness of life that we may never depart from Thee. Lead us into all holy ways, and withdraw us from all sin. Give us strength to serve Thee earnestly in our youth, that we may know Thee and love Thee all the days of our life. Suffer not our spiritual life to grow weak. Let not the pleasures of the world dazzle us, nor vain dreams possess our souls. We desire to give Thee our youth. Aid us in conquering all evil appetites, that we may approve ourselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and may daily be prepared for death. O Father, succour us for Thy dear Son Jesus Christ's sake.

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Gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation.

IN the portion of Scripture appointed for the Epistle, it is said of certain Samaritans that the Holy Ghost had “fallen on none of them; only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord. Then laid they (i. e. the Apostles St. Peter and St. John) their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” Now at first sight we might say that this act of laying on of hands was the means of gaining them the first gift of the Holy Ghost, that till that was done they were dark and dead, without spiritual life or light, children of wrath and not children of God. In short, at first sight this text seems to contradict all the passages of Scripture in the previous tract, which prove that “by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” But we must not hurry through Scripture, nor travel hastily through the holy paths of God’s written Word, nor think that we can

see all things clearly at a glance. If we stop and read what has gone before, we shall see that the inspired writer did not mean to say the Samaritans had received no gift whatever of the Holy Ghost; for he says above, that they "had received the Word of God;" and we know they could not have received the Word nor confessed Christ, except some power of the Holy Ghost had fallen on them. The truth is, there are diversities of gifts, and when it is said the Holy Ghost had fallen on none of them, it is merely meant that the particular kind of gift which was conveyed by laying on of hands had not fallen on them, because no hands had been laid on them; their teacher St. Philip, who was but a deacon in the Church, was not able to perform an act which the Apostles or Chief Pastors of the Church alone were empowered to fulfil.

But in reading this Scripture thus explained, we learn this great truth, that through the act of laying on of the hands of our chief Pastors, a particular gift of the Holy Ghost is conveyed to those who have been baptized into the body of Christ; we see that there is a sort of after-repast of grace following close on Baptism, of which the members of the Church should be anxious to par-

take. The name we give to this act well describes what manner of spiritual gift is then received. The word "Confirmation" tells its own tale ; it is a confirming or strengthening gift, just the gift the new-born children of God require, just the gift out of the treasury of grace suited to the particular need of the new-born soul. No wonder the Samaritans who had been baptized into Christ had a holy thirst for such an after supply of grace as might fix and strengthen them in the ways of Christ. From children of wrath they had been changed into children of grace ; but now they wanted God to confirm and settle them in that spiritual state. What they wanted, God gave ; what we want, He also gives to us : He does not cause us to be born again of water and of the Spirit, and then to live as we can ; His reservoir of grace is not exhausted by that one great and glorious gift. He does not tire of those whom He has once chosen, nor does His love grow cold. He does not take us across the Red sea of Baptism, and leave us to perish in the wilderness. Nay, He opens out fresh stores of grace ; He has fresh channels of grace. He is ready to confirm and set His seal to His first act, to abide by His word pledged in Baptism, to put *His hand to His former deed, to repeat afresh*

His gracious promises, so that in two senses His Spirit conveys a gift in Confirmation. First, He confirms or strengthens us with new grace; next, He confirms or seals as it were his own part of the covenant made with us at our Baptism, to shew that He withdraws not from us on His side, that His first word is fast. He approaches us again with His Spirit; He comes to us afresh; this time He lays His hands upon us; He blesses us, as a father does his children. He lays His hands upon us by His deputies, by those who are in Christ's stead, by those who are well called in our Church our "Fathers in God." He chooses His chief Ministers, those who are deputed to perform the higher ministrations, who seem to be most in our heavenly Father's place.

And is not the outward part of Confirmation full of meaning? To lay the hands upon the head is the way in which fathers bless their children. We do not lay our hands upon strangers; and hence that such an outward act should have been chosen is at once proof that the baptized have been already numbered among the children of God, and that God desires to keep all those who have been baptized among His children.

How great then is the love of God toward us, and how great His care! First, in Holy Baptism

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we are born again; then, in Confirmation our spiritual life receives fresh strength; God again pours into our soul fresh assistances and grace, and again assures us that He has not changed in His purpose of giving us His blessed gift of everlasting life for Christ's sake. Our Father's blessing rests upon us; His fatherly hand is over us; His Spirit comes to us with new gifts to stablish and to settle His former gifts. What need we more? what more is to be desired?

We "have all and abound;" the pools are filled with water; our cup is full; the horn of spiritual plenty is in our hand; grace follows grace; gift succeeds gift; and as new wants spring up, new temptations crowd upon our opening years, behold, new powers aid the growth and strength of the spiritual man that we may be equal to our increasing trials.

But if, by means of laying on of hands, we, like the Samaritans of old, are able to receive the Holy Ghost, we see at once how very holy, how very solemn a thing, is this rite of Confirmation. When we seek to be confirmed, we seek the Holy Ghost; we seek to bring Him down from heaven; we place ourselves in God's presence, and offer ourselves to the Spirit; we open as it were the door of our souls and invite Him to

enter in ; and in drawing near to the chief Pastor and Ambassador of Christ, we thereby draw very near to God, that we may have His hand laid upon us. We as much as say, "Come, O Holy Ghost, and visit me afresh. Come, and confirm me in the faith. Come, and take possession of me again. Come, and take me to be Thine for ever ; dwell in this my body and sanctify me wholly, that I may be wholly God's."

It cannot be a light thing to be confirmed ; it is not a mere form ; the Spirit is there, with whatever temper we come ; the Spirit is there, if we are there before God, before His Ambassador, and in His church. It is a great act, however we behave, whether we are prepared or unprepared ; we do not go empty away ; we take with us a great blessing, or the contrary. There is either actual good received, or actual harm, great gain or great loss. If we ourselves ask the Spirit to draw near and seek the outward means whereby He comes, we may be sure that He does draw near. And as we are then, so is He towards us.

It is either a mocking invitation or an earnest one ; and as He is present in either case, He takes us on our own ground. His blessing descends upon the earnest-minded and sincere, for

He knows their sincerity, and delights over them as they kneel in prayerful expectation of His gifts. To the light-minded, who come lightly, as though it were a thing of sport, the idle act of an idle day, He comes angrily. He reserves His despised gifts, and while the hand of the Pastor, who cannot know the heart, descends, there is no blessing from on high, but rather frowns and looks of sorrow. The youth goes from his heavenly Father's presence unblest, and there is grief for him in heaven. To bring an unprepared soul to such a rite, is to lay upon the altar of God an unholy thing.

Neither can we escape sin simply by staying away ; that is to withdraw ourselves from God, to say we need Him not, to turn our back upon Him, to refuse His strengthening gifts, and to choose instead the service of the world. To come, is our duty ; to come reverently, gravely, seriously, is our duty too. We should well consider what we are about ; we should prepare ourselves for the gift of God, that the gift may come in all its fulness. If some prince were about to visit us, how diligently should we get all things ready ; long beforehand would our minds be dwelling on his coming, and we should be at *pains to study the manner of pleasing him and*

having all things to his mind. And shall we do less for God the Holy Ghost, the great and abiding Guest of saints? Shall we hurry with careless steps, without thought or preparation of ourselves, into the House of God, and there seek the Spirit in a light and reckless mood? Surely we should think more of the visitations of the Spirit of God, when He is prepared to visit with gifts in His hands, better than corn and wine, silver or gold, jewels or precious things. Surely we should think more of the honour, the grace, the blessedness of His coming under our roof, whom we are not worthy to receive. Surely our hearts should overflow with thankfulness and holy joy, when we have these offers of spiritual strength, by which we may be able to do the will of our Lord, and to reach the crown of life which our Lord has purchased by His blood. Surely we should with great gladness and great diligence sweep our house clean, and prepare the guest-chamber of our heart for such an one as this whom Christ sends to supply all our needs. Surely we should look forward to the season of Confirmation long before it comes, as a time full of privileges, a time greatly to be desired and longed for, greatly to be esteemed. Surely we should be anxious to be prepared aright and to

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have our souls dressed for the feast of grace, that we may be partakers of all the grace that is conveyed to trustful and earnest souls in that holy rite. With love and holy fear, with reverence and godly joy, we should approach the Temple of the Lord, and, kneeling down, wait in prayer for our Father's blessing, which is signified to us by the laying upon our heads of their hands whom Christ sends with power to bless in His Name. Surely when God deigns to confer benefits, and in great love asks us to receive His strengthening gifts, we should not slight such love, nor treat as a grievous commandment a most merciful offer of grace.

And there is the more need to prepare ourselves for Confirmation, when we consider not only God's part therein, but ours also. Not only does God by His Spirit put the seal to His former gift, His former agreement, His former covenant, but we also on our part renew or make afresh in our own persons, and with our own mouth, the promises that were made on our side at our Baptism. We meet God to put our seal and our hand to the deed. We deliver ourselves over to God in a deliberate and formal act; we openly declare our desire to abide by the *Baptismal Covenant*; we openly express our wish

to obtain His most gracious gifts, that we may have strength to be sure and faithful to our word. We go before God in the most holy place to renew our vows. We seek His presence, that in His presence we may affirm our purpose of devoting ourselves to Him, as strict, as decided, as earnest followers of Christ.

Is this a step, I ask, to be lightly taken? Is this a vow lightly to be made? Are we to go and speak most solemn words without meaning, without thinking what we say? Are we to turn a most solemn rite into a mere farce or idle form? Are we just to look upon it as a day of pleasure, or as something to be got over and got through at a certain time of life, because it is expected of us? Are we to think nothing of that important, responsible act of life, till the very day; to live just as we did up to the day, as if it were an every-day act? O not in this way or in this spirit should we approach the Altar, or utter words that are heard in heaven. Woe be to all who trifle with holy things and holy rites. Let us not mock God with hollow words that carry great promises from the lip. Let us not say great things before God that we do not intend to do, nor beat the air with great vows that are but air, and have not come from

our hearts. Angels must needs sorrow when they see the young ones of Christ mocking Christ in His own house. Nay, Christ Himself must sorrow to see the young ones whom He has made His brethren by His own sufferings in the flesh, saying they desire to act as becomes brethren when their heart means no such thing, and the tongue is a deceiver in His house; the Holy Ghost must needs sorrow, when those in whom He planted life pretend to desire an increase of life, and yet refuse sincerely to ask for those strengthening gifts which He is willing abundantly to bestow. God is not mocked, we may be sure; and I most earnestly implore all who are unconfirmed, to remember that in that great act, not only their outward conduct, but their innermost heart, the very core of their heart, is seen through as crystal by the searching light of the Spirit of truth.

But you may say, that it is very much to promise, that you wish we could promise less. Truly we promise much. "To renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh;—to believe all the articles of the Christian Faith;—to keep God's holy will and commandments," *is of course to pledge ourselves, to com-*

mit ourselves to a very serious work. There is no disguising it; it is a vow full of self-denials, against the grain, involving a continual series of sacrifices, of contradictions of self, of mortifyings of our natural will. Who dare say that godliness is an easy road? It is not smooth and broad; the Cross is not a wreath of flowers; the Christian's way is not as velvet turf into which his foot softly sinks. Scripture nowhere says that the course of faith is an easy course. It is best at once to see that it says the contrary. Christ's service is a thorny path. We naturally like worldly pleasure, worldly vanities, worldly pomps, worldly consequence, worldly praise, worldly ease, worldly pursuits. To be in the world, not of it, to be surrounded by worldly things and to be as dead and crucified men in the midst of them, is certainly to choose a self-denying and difficult part.

But suppose the terms seem hard, and the vow renewed at Confirmation implies, as it does a whole life of self-denial, what is your state if you withhold your heart from the vow, if you refuse to repeat it with your lips, or repeat it without sincere purpose of heart? What is your state? You have no prospect but one full of fear and dread and great terror. Hell is

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before you ; sure, certain and everlasting death, with pains intolerable, is the portion you choose, unless you choose the self-denying path of faith. It may be hard to restrain your passions, your worldly appetites and desires, it may be hard to walk strictly according to Christ's holy law ; but is that so hard a life as a *life in hell* ? Allowing that Christ's service, which you choose with your own mouth in Confirmation, brings trials and sacrifices and losses of pleasure, are these trials worse and more unbearable than the eternal torments of hell ? To give up the world and to serve Christ, to flee from evil and cleave to that which is good, is in other words to give up hell.

We cannot, certainly, pick and choose what commandments to keep and what to break. God will not take half a heart ; "all or none," is His law ; if we do not give our whole self to Him, we are none of His ; we cannot serve two masters ; we cannot wear two liveries ; we cannot be on two sides at once ; we cannot serve in two armies ; the almost Christian is like Lot's wife, the feet going one way, the head and the heart another. Is it likely that our Lord should like half-hearted followers, half-loyal subjects, and soldiers who strike one blow on His side, and *then another on His enemy's* ? No ;—trembling

hesitating vows, followed by a wavering life that tries not to lose the next life and yet to enjoy this, are utterly fruitless in God's sight. Put your hand to the plough, grasp it tightly with a determined heart; this is the true, the only way to escape the damnation of hell.

But let us consider not only what we escape by a thorough consecration of ourselves to Christ, but what we gain. See the privilege of being allowed to make covenant with God, and the wonderful graciousness of the terms. Do not look upon your vows or the life to which your vows bind you, as the parts of grievous commandments. Consider the mercifulness of God in accepting your service for Christ's sake; for when you have done all you are unprofitable servants, and have done very much amiss. Consider the grace of being called, of being enabled to escape hell, the grace of being enabled to offer a service which through the sacrifice of Christ is not cast aside, imperfect as it must be, but is accepted as a sweet-smelling savour. Consider also that to escape hell by a faithful and devoted following of Christ, is to attain heaven.

And now all ye who love pleasures, all ye who love riches, all ye who love honours, all ye who love rest and ease, all ye who love glory and

bright things, think of the kingdom of heaven which your Lord has opened with His blood. There are pleasures at God's right hand for evermore; there are the true riches which have no wings to flee away, and no rust to canker them; there are the eternal honours and the crown of glory that fadeth not away; there perfect peace and eternal rest. Lift up your eyes and see by faith the good things, the glorious things, of heaven. See the eternal City of God, where there is no sorrow and no pain, and no care and no death. As bright visions of the place of glory and of perfect joy shine before your soul, then judge whether God has not dealt most graciously, most mercifully with us, in entering into that covenant of grace by which the heavenly kingdom with all its glories and all its pleasures can be attained. Should we not most thankfully lay ourselves at our Saviour's feet, who has obtained for us these exceeding great and precious promises? Should we not most thankfully offer all our powers, all our faculties, all our hearts, to Him who has opened to us the living way into His Kingdom and glory? Should we not with great gratefulness put our seal to that most gracious covenant which He seals by His *Spirit*? Should we not most willingly make vows

of service, and with all the warmth of our heart promise to serve Him from our youth upward to the utmost of our power? What are the best pleasures, the best promises, the best professions of the world, compared with the promises of God in Christ? The world passeth away with all worldly things.

I pray you therefore to choose the good part, and not turn back. I pray you to serve your Saviour from your youth. Should your heart sink as the trials of a very strict and very holy life rise before you, then remember that you will not be left to fight alone. This is the very benefit of Confirmation, the very object of its appointment, that we might get strength, that we might obtain the effectual succour of the Holy Ghost, that we might be sustained by that great Ally in the day of battle, who can quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and shield our souls from his venomous spears.—If God be for us, who can be against us?

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

ALL the days of our life are to be spent in the service and worship of our God, and we must ever worship Him as Three in One, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Yet we have a day especially set apart for remembering this divine mystery in His eternal being, that we may think of it so far as He shall enable us, and learn what we can of the meaning of what He has made known to us concerning Himself.

For this name of Trinity, or Threeness, as it is sometimes found in Old English, signifies to us, not only that the being of God is of a mysterious and hidden kind, and beyond the reach of our understanding, but also that He has been pleased to make Himself known, in part at least, and so far as we could bear, to us His creatures. For in that we say three, we distinguish one from another, and shew that we know something

of each of those blessed and adorable Persons. It is no small wonder that we are able to do so; but since it has pleased the everlasting Son of God to take our flesh upon Him, and to be one of us, it is but fitting that this other wonder should follow, and that we who are by adoption the brethren of the only-begotten Son, should know who He is, and who is His Father, and have communion with the Spirit of the Father and the Son.

And therefore when He had finished His ministry on earth, and had gone through all those mysteries of His Incarnation, His Nativity, His Passion and His Resurrection, and was just about to ascend where He was before, and to return to the glory which He had before the world was, He gave His Apostles a commission to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Thus did He fix upon His Church for ever the name of the ever-blessed Trinity, and print it on the brow of each one of us as a seal and mark of our profession, that we belong to God, to this God, the true God, maker of heaven and earth, now known to His creatures under this adorable Name, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

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Thus are we different from all those who were left to feel after Him in darkness, if so be they might find Him, and who could only assure themselves that there was some great hidden Power that made and governed the world. We know not only that the Father dwelleth in light inaccessible, but also that the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him, and that the Spirit of the Father and the Son witnesseth of Him on earth. And therefore, when we have gone through the history of the manifestations of God in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and in the descent of the Holy Ghost upon His disciples, we keep yet another festival, to sum up all that we have learned in giving glory to God for the whole of His great and various revelations of Himself, and acknowledging, with saints and angels above, the blessed and holy Trinity.

And in so doing we are reminded of a portion of Christian truth which we might perhaps otherwise bear too little in mind, namely, that the whole dispensation of our Lord's becoming Man, and suffering for us, and rising again in our nature, and reigning over us in the Spirit, and finally coming to purify His Church by the last judgment, and take it thus perfected to

Himself, has its end in bringing us into perfect communion with the unseen and eternal Godhead. This is what St. Paul sets before us when he says, (1 Cor. xv. 25—28,) “He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when he saith, all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.” This is not meant as if God the Son should then be lower than the Father, or as if there could be any change in the eternal relation between those Divine Persons, but that the kingdom of the Son of God as Son of man, which is now a kind of exception in the whole kingdom of God, because sin is mixed up with obedience in it, and God bears with it for His sake, this kingdom, I say, shall be taken into perfect union with the everlasting kingdom of the Almighty, in which He is truly obeyed, even that heavenly kingdom into which nothing can enter that defileth.

This is what we mean, and what we ought to

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bear in mind, when we pray to Our Father which is in heaven, and say, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." And we cannot have right thoughts concerning our Lord Jesus Christ and His kingdom, unless we remember that He is the everlasting Son of the everlasting Father, and that His kingdom is the Father's. And therefore on this day we read the history of God's creating the world, that we may remember that all these things we see, once were not, and God dwelt in His own eternal blessedness, the same from everlasting. The birth of sun moon and stars made no change in Him, (James i. 17,) "in whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning." His works have their beginning, and their changes, and their end too unless He sustain them, but He is for ever the same, and changes not. Send back your thoughts into the farthest depths of eternity, and still He is there, without beginning, the very same as now; and look forward beyond the last judgment, beyond all imaginable ages, and still He is the same, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Almighty and everlasting God.

And in the creation we also see another truth regarding the ever-blessed Trinity; I mean the *unity of operation* in the Godhead, that is

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how the Three Persons unite in every act of God. Thus we read of the Father as the Maker of heaven and earth, but we also read that He made all things by His Son ; and in Job xxvi., " By His Spirit He garnished the heavens ;" and Ps. xxxiii. 6, " By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of His mouth." And in the first chapter of Genesis we read that " God said, Let us make man in our own image," as if to shew that the three Persons worked in one will and counsel and act. And so some holy men have thought that there is an image of the Holy Trinity in man, in that he has reason and will as well as thought, and the three make one mind, and always act together. When we think of any thing, we understand and reason upon it, and have our will concerning it, and our reason seems in a manner to be born of our thinking, and our will to proceed from our thinking and reasoning, and all three go together whenever we do any thing as reasonable men. And certainly it seems that these powers in us are made use of in Holy Scripture as the likenesses of the three Persons in the Godhead. For the Greek which we translate " Word" in St. John, might be translated Reason. And so again our

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Lord is sometimes called by the name of Wisdom. However, we must take care not to suppose that this is a perfect likeness of what is in the God-head, since these things in us are only powers, not persons. And if it were only so in the God-head, the Son could not have taken our flesh upon Him by Himself, without the Father becoming incarnate too. Now His incarnation was the work of the Father by the Holy Ghost, as well as His own, but it was Himself alone, the eternal Son of the Father, and not either the Father or the Holy Ghost, that became incarnate.

This is a great mystery, and we must not think and speak of it rashly as though we knew all about it; but thus much has been said, because there are some passages of Holy Scripture which we may understand the better for having thus reflected on it, and no doubt we were meant to see something of it in them. And since we are told (John xviii. 3) that to know God is life eternal, it cannot be right that we should pass by what we are told concerning Himself. We may not perfectly understand it, but the little we are able to know now, may be the ground for more hereafter, and even such as it is, it is a great help to our love of God, and our *thoughts of Him* in every way. For His telling

us so much is the sign that He is pleased to be known to us, and to give us the opportunity of living to Him.


Now there are those who ask, Why can we live to Him any the more for knowing that He is Three in One? But this is a thoughtless question if it is really put as an objection to our meditating on the doctrine. If any person whom we had never seen had been very kind to us, we should certainly wish to know his name, his age, where he lived, and a number of things that were nothing to us in themselves. And if he took the trouble to inform us of some of these, we should naturally think he would some day let us know more, and perhaps come and visit us, perhaps let us go and see him. And the thought of this would be a help to our keeping his kindness in remembrance, and setting our hearts upon him. So it is with God, and with the knowledge of Him. Every point of knowledge that we gain is something toward an acquaintance with Him, and we cannot tell how much it is worth till it is put together with other things that we may learn, either here or beyond the grave.

Besides, our blessed Lord has come so visibly near to us, that we should have quite a wrong

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notion of Him if we did not know the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; that is, that, as God, He is the everlasting Son of the Father, and that the Holy Spirit, whom He sends to be with us and in us, to make us holy for Himself, is also very and eternal God, proceeding from the Father and the Son. Knowing this, we know how to worship, and reverence, and love our Lord Jesus Christ, and to see the Father in Him, and to live in awe and thankfulness at the gift and indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

So then we do not think only of two numbers, three and one, but of One whom we know, and Three whom we know in that One. And when we read any of those passages of Holy Scripture in which the number three is set forth in mystery, we see in it more than the mere number, even the memorial of the Name of our God, and of all His mighty works, and all His unspeakable mercies. Thus in reading of the three that appeared to Abraham, we cannot but think of the Holy Trinity, and suppose that it is on account of that mystery that the number three is so often used in connection with the Divine Majesty. On the most solemn occasions we find God speaking thrice, or thrice mentioning *His own name*, and the saints and angels



ally addressed, and who remained talking
him as the angels went on to Sodom,
see a symbol of the Holy Trinity in His
ing as one of three. It is thought that
Himself visible by means of an angel, in
He spoke, and by whom He caused such
ances as that of the fire in the bush, or that
of Sinai, or again the human forms in which
sometimes appeared, and in which He
in one verse "the Lord," and in the next
Angel of the Lord." And if this was so
presentation would be the more proper
would be three angels representing the
ever-blessed Persons.

Nor is there any thing strange in this
our Lord has taught even us on earth that

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ord. That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us," (John xvii. 20, 21.) So if the oneness of the Holy Trinity may be an example of unity to us, much more may three blessed archangels, pure and mighty spirits, talking together in God on one holy and gracious mission, set forth a kind of shadow of the Three divine Persons.

Not indeed that we can be one as God is One, eternal and unchangeable oneness, any more than three angels could be one angel. Three men must be always three men, and there are not three Gods, but three Persons in one God. But still the three families of the sons of Noah may be united in one new Man, the mystical body of Christ, and so be one not only in will and action, but in a derived and continued life. That is, they may be one in Christ, by having their new life from Him by the Holy Spirit, which life is in them and abides, so that they live by it, and are one by it, for ever. And this bond of union, issuing in a perfect unity of purpose and communion of love, is the closest image we can conceive in created beings of the unity of the ever-blessed Trinity.

We could hardly have ventured to think of

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this for ourselves, but learning it as we do from the mouth of the Son of God, we see that it flows from the union of the human with the divine nature in Him. And this is true both of what is of creation, and of what comes by the grace of God after creation. For man was created, no doubt, with a view to the dwelling of God the Son, one day, and for ever, in our flesh. And that image of God in which he was created had the eternal Spirit of life breathed into it by the Incarnation, so that from thenceforth we might expect to see in renewed man the clearest representations of things above the heavens. And since our Lord has been pleased to set before us His own unity with the Father as the example for our own unity in Himself, we may take this, with reverent joy, as a sign and pledge of the closest union and communion with the divine nature itself.

And when, as on this day, we solemnly recite in God's presence the Creed of St. Athanasius, we should not do it with feelings of proud contempt towards those who have fallen into error, and have rejected any part of the sacred truth it contains, but with awe at once and thankfulness at the thought of God's wonderful condescension in so revealing Himself to us. With thankfulness

that He has been pleased to make us so far acquainted with Himself, and with awe, lest we should ever think or speak foolishly of things divine, or lest we should prove ourselves unworthy of communion with Him by following after earthly vanities. The very strangeness that we sometimes feel, as though we could find nothing in all this but mysteries too hard for us, should be a lesson and a warning to us, and should send us, not away from the thought, nor into any vain effort to master it by our own reason and powers of mind, but to our Catechism, where we have learned how this mystery bears upon our life, and to prayer, meditation, and holy obedience, that we may be ever near to our God.

We must not indeed think that we know all about God the Father, because we know that He made us and all the world, or all about God the Son, because we know that He redeemed us and all mankind, or all about God the Holy Ghost, because we know that He sanctifieth us and all the elect people of God; there may be endless other truths concerning the blessed Persons in the Godhead which are not for us to know in our present dark and sinful state. But these are the *points* by which especially they are made

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known to us now, and which go together toward that great work of our salvation and eternal blessedness in which we see the glory and the goodness of the one everlasting God, and the several agency of each Person in the Godhead. These will supply us with matter for love and wonder at present, but we may hope hereafter to see more fully what means that Name in which we were baptized, and which we should never mention without the joy of communion with God, and of the hope of an ever-increasing knowledge and love of Him.

And as those who reckon the Sundays in the following seasons from Pentecost, are admonished by the name of this day that we are living in the dispensation of the Spirit, so let us who name them after Trinity Sunday, be reminded that we are living in the kingdom of God, that is, of that holy and blessed Trinity in whose Name we were baptized, and in whose glory all things are to end, even the works of our blessed Lord, as well as those of His whole body upon earth.

We have no fact of history to commemorate this day, because it is kept as a memorial of eternity, and of that which is above all history and beyond all time. We cannot spread out our own being into the ages before we were

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born, but we can rejoice that our life is in Him who is from all eternity the same, and will be to all eternity. And the thought of His making known to us eternal truths relating to His own Being should enlarge our hopes and desires after further knowledge of Him, and encourage us to take our delight in such glimpses as He vouchsafes us of His glory.

The knowledge of His Name, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, belongs to the last time, when He has prepared mankind to serve Him in Spirit and in Truth; and every time we hear it, we should be awakened to the remembrance that we are called truly to know Him, and no longer, like those of old, to look for Him in the darkness of dim types and shadows. And perhaps this is the real reason why some shrink back from dwelling on the thought. If they would find it a joyful and a fruitful thought, they must rise so much above themselves, and their present low and earthly ways. They have no taste for things in the heavens, and above the heavens, and they choose rather to bring their religion down to their earthly, sensual, godless life, than to raise their life above this world, that their religion may be free, and their affections heavenly.

But the Church of God has always been of

another mind. She has never shrunk from sending forth her utmost efforts of thought as well as of love toward her heavenly Father, and it has ever been her delight to set before her children the view of His everlasting glory, and the highest contemplations they can reach with respect to His being and nature. And therefore she keeps ever in their mouths the Creeds which contain the substance of her faith concerning God, and the hymn *Te Deum*, which is in itself a kind of creed, while it shews us how to make our creed also a hymn, and in which the same sacred mysteries are set forth to the glory of God and the joy of every soul that delights to feel itself resting on His everlasting arms, safe in His protection, rich in the possession of Him.

And at the end of every psalm, too, we sing the Doxology, which ascribes all glory to the eternal Trinity, that we may refer all things there written, and by us recited, to such an understanding as shews that they belong to the kingdom of God, and not only with reference to what was known under the law of God's work in creation, but also in such manner as He is known to us in the further revelation of Himself, by the *finished work of redemption*, and the present

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work of sanctification, and all that is shewn us of what is to be hereafter, whether in what our Lord has foretold to us, or opened to us in the ancient Scriptures, or in what His Apostles have delivered to us from His teaching and that of His Holy Spirit, or in that last mysterious vision of St. John the divine.

We cannot think of all these things at once, but there is only the more reason why we should often think of them, in order that although we do not always go over them all in our minds, when we hear of the Holy Trinity, yet we may always feel toward God according to what we know by faith concerning Him. For so it is even with earthly parents and friends, we do not think of all the several kindnesses they have done us each time we hear of them or see them, but the sum of all is laid up in our hearts, so that we really bear all in mind, and love them for all, while we think expressly perhaps but of one. It would distract our minds if every time we invoke the Persons of the blessed Trinity in the Litany, or receive a blessing in that sacred Name, we were to attempt to run over all that we know of each, and of the one Godhead which we worship in all. But our mind toward our God will be that which comes of all our thoughts con-

cerning Him, and acts toward Him, summed up in their effect, and therefore we must both attend to each thing that He reveals to us, and remember that all the lines of that glory which He has so graciously manifested to us, meet and unite in the one mystery of the Holy Trinity.

We cannot comprehend how His Saints will rejoice in communion with one another and with the holy Angels hereafter, and yet have their whole blessedness in Him. Yet we know that both must be true, and that all our holy affections, each abiding for itself, must unite in one act of love to Him. And so, if we attain to that blessed state, will all our powers of knowledge and of love find their full exercise, not only in reflecting on the several acts of our Redemption, but in the contemplation of the Godhead, now revealed to us in open vision, and beheld as far as may be by created eyes, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, One God from everlasting and to everlasting. To whom be glory for evermore. Amen.

DEVOTION.

HOLY, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who hast graciously made Thyself known to us Thy creatures, we thank Thee, we bless Thee, we praise Thy glorious Name, because Thou hast been pleased to shew us of Thy majesty, and of Thy glory, and of Thy goodness. And we beseech Thee to give us grace evermore to worship Thee with stedfast faith, with love unfeigned, and with a pure heart and conscience. And since we are baptized in Thy Name, give us grace to glorify it among men by a godly life and conversation, that Thou mayest never be blasphemed because of us, but that Thy truth may be manifest in Thy servants.

O Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
Have mercy upon us, and manifest Thyself to us.

O eternal Son of the Father, Saviour of mankind,
Have mercy upon us, and manifest Thyself to us.

O holy and eternal Spirit, giver of life and holiness,

Have mercy upon us, and manifest Thyself to us.

O Holy, Holy, Holy, blessed and glorious and all-sustaining Trinity, Three Persons and one God, from everlasting and to everlasting,

Have mercy upon us, and manifest Thyself to us.

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O Lord our God, our Light, and our Life, make us to know ever more and more that our true and eternal blessedness is in the knowledge and the love of Thee, and do Thou of Thy great mercy come, according to Thy promise, and dwell with us, and keep us evermore in true communion with Thee, and grant that we may increase in the knowledge of Thee, and in the love of Thee, and in obedience to Thy blessed word and will, that Thou mayest be our hope, our safety, and our comfort in this present life, and our home, our rest, and our joy everlastingly in the world to come.

In the eternal Son
Is God the Father shewn,
In the eternal Son
Man sits upon the throne,
In the eternal Son
The Spirit is our own !
Where is our heart that we
Not yet from sin are free ?
Mercy we ask of Thee,
O blessed Trinity,
Mercy we ask of Thee,
Mercy we ask of Thee.

JOHN HENRY PARKER, OXFORD AND LONDON.

facts for the Christian Seasons.

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Want of love.

“ Good evening, Sir, what a fine day it has been.”

“ A fine day, James, and a very warm day too; at least I thought so this afternoon in church,” replied Mr. King; “ but we must expect such weather at this season, and be thankful for it. To-morrow, you know, is St. Barnabas’ day, and I dare say you have heard the old saying, which shews that we may look for fine weather at this time of year :—

“ Barnaby Bright,

The longest day and the shortest night.”

“ Yes, Mr. King, I recollect the old saying well. I hope that you will not be offended, Sir, but I have a favour to ask of you. I came round this way on purpose to know what sort of collection you got for our parish school this

morning; I hope it was a good one, better than last year's, Sir?"

Old James was soon satisfied on this subject, but still he did not seem quite willing to break off the conversation which had been thus begun with his pastor, and Mr. King plainly perceiving that he had something else to say, rather encouraged him to continue talking as they both walked homewards from the little church of Holtwell, towards the village of Bunstead to which it belonged. The evening was most beautiful, the road was a pleasant one, and the Vicar and James were very old friends, and justly felt great regard and attachment to each other. A little more friendly conversation, which need not now be repeated, soon brought old James up to the point at which he was aiming; and the subject of the day's collection, in which both rich and poor were called upon to cast in their money together, as an offering to the Lord of Hosts for the spiritual teaching of their neighbours' children, soon led to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

James expressed a wish to have two or three things connected with this parable explained to him, and though Mr. King was rather tired with his day's duty, still he undertook the task with

pleasure. The conversation was agreeable and improving to them both. The good humble-minded parishioner was not allowed to depart empty from the presence of the priest, "the messenger of the Lord of Hosts," at whose mouth the people should "seek the law." And the clergyman, as it often happens, was himself a gainer by the very effort he had made to instruct one of the souls committed to his charge. I will not repeat all that passed between the Vicar and his enquiring friend. James's principal questions were these. First, what had the rich man in the parable done, that was so bad as to deserve the punishment he met with? And, next, why so many Christian people do, in the face of this parable, desire more earnestly than any thing else to be rich in worldly goods? Conversation is always liable to be broken and interrupted, as well as lengthy; so for shortness and plainness the substance of Mr. King's answer to these two enquiries shall be put together. James listened with attention, now and then making a remark or putting a question which was generally to the purpose. And when he and his Vicar wished each other good night at the top of the village, they both felt more deeply than usual the close *endearing nature* of those ties which unite the

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Head of the Church and all the members of that body together ; they thankfully acknowledged the power of that spiritual relationship which our spiritual shepherds, and the sheep of their flocks, and the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, do all respectively bear to one another.

“ You ask, James, what had the rich man, in the parable which we heard in this morning’s Gospel, done, that was so bad as to deserve the punishment he met with ? I might easily answer your question by asking another. What great evil had the servant done, who, in another parable, took care of his master’s talent by hiding it in the earth ? The lesson taught is the same in both passages. It is not only for the actual mischief which they do, but likewise for the good which they might have done, but did not, that men will be called to account. When any one confesses that he has done what he ought not, he confesses but half his sins, and that, in many cases, not the worst half of them. It is not till we come to own how much we have left undone, which we ought to have done, and might have done, that we can form any notion of our need of mercy, of the extent of our own sinfulness, or the depths of our Creator’s love. Indeed the most common occurrences of every-

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lay life supply us with plenty of proofs that men, who, like the rich man or the servant in our Lord's parables, are not doing good with what God has given into their hands, are, in fact, doing evil ; and deserve, as unprofitable servants, to be cast into outer darkness. Who, for example, does not see at once that a servant who does not work for his master's profit is a bad servant ? Or who would defend the father or the husband, whose only excuse for utterly neglecting to do any good to the wife or children with whom he had been blessed, was merely this, that he had done them no bodily injury, but had let them altogether alone ? Nay, even the very beasts that labour for our support or guard our houses would furnish us with like examples. A bad horse is one which, while he eats and drinks, will do little or no work ; he need not be vicious and kicking in order to be reckoned, and justly reckoned, good for nothing. So, likewise, the fault of a bad house-dog is not so much his doing what is positively wrong, as his being a 'dumb dog,' his forgetting to do what is his right and proper duty. And thus we shall find it in a thousand instances.

“ Now applying these facts to the case of the *rich man in the parable*, we shall soon perceive

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what a light they throw upon it. Even posing, though it appears otherwise to a thoughtful Christian, that there was no 'lust of the flesh,' no 'lust of the eyes,' nor 'pride of life,' deserving the doom pronounced upon who was clad in fine linen and fared sumptuously every day, yet what would that profit him? Because the servant that hid his talent was a thief, as well as slothful, did he escape darkness? Why then should the rich man escape punishment for not having used his things rightly upon no better excuse than that that he might have used them even more wisely than he did? And whatever increase of wealth we may imagine possible in his particular case so far as we are informed of it, we must forget that God looks at the heart of a man less than at the evil works which may proceed from it. Bitter indeed was the root which brought forth such fruits of selfish luxury and slothful carelessness, as the parable mentions. How then can we suppose that because the fruits might have been even worse than these were, the root was not bitter at all? Why might as well suppose that King Ahab did wrong, when he put the prophet of the Lord into prison, and fed him with the bread

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affliction and the water of affliction, because he might have done worse,—he might have slain him! What then, you will ask, was the root of that rich man's offence, the unseen but actual source of all his sin and punishment? Turn from the Gospel to the Epistle for the day, and you will find your enquiry satisfied. **HE DID NOT LOVE GOD. HE DID NOT LOVE HIS BROTHER.**

“Now the only proof to be depended upon of a man's really loving God, is this. He will, in the first place, listen to the words of God proclaimed and witnessed by His duly authorized messengers, Moses and the prophets, under the law, and the Apostles and their successors, under the better covenant of the Gospel. And, in the next place, having so far shewn his love of God as to listen to His message and receive it, he will complete the full proof of his love to his Maker, by acting according to His will. Otherwise, such an one will be building indeed, but not upon the rock; he may hear his Master's sayings, but of what profit to him will this be, if he does them not? He may indeed be loving after a fashion,—after the fashion of the world which passeth away,—but not after the heavenly pattern of Christian love. In short, he will be loving in word only and in tongue, not in deed and in

truth. And the proof is much the same with regard to the next duty,—the second of those two commandments on which ‘hang all the law and the prophets.’ For how can a man love his brother, except he is earnestly endeavouring every hour of his life to keep his Redeemer’s saying, and to do unto all men as he would have them to do unto him? Thus the very affection which leads the faithful servant to delight in doing his Master’s will, leads him, in dutiful obedience to that will, to delight also in being kind to his fellow-servants.

“Now try the conduct of the rich man in the parable,—so far as we are enabled to judge of it,—by these rules, and you will see that he was plainly wanting in both duties. First, for his love of God. What made him so extremely anxious, after he had himself come to his place of torment and sorrow, in behalf of his five brethren? It was evidently a feeling that they were walking in his steps, and that the same way which he had trodden would most likely bring them also to the same unhappy end. To hinder this from taking place, and, if possible, to stop them in their downward path, the rich man begs that Lazarus may be sent to ‘testify’ unto them. Of what was it that they seemed to need

to have fresh and more awful witness repeated in their ears? It was of those great truths which God had declared by Moses and the prophets, for Abraham clearly affirms, that if they would have listened to the witness of these, they would have wanted no further witness, and that if they refused to hear these, they would turn an equally deaf ear upon all other witness, even the witness of a miracle. Such was the state of the five brethren, for whom the rich man was so justly alarmed, and such, no doubt, during his life-time, had been his own state. And how vainly, in such a course of life as these men were leading, shall we look for the marks or for the fruits of the love of God! The man who really loves his great Creator, hears His words; it is only he that is not of God who heareth not God's words. Of course, our hearing them is of no use, except we do them likewise, and this is indeed the final fruit of the love of God in our hearts. But before we can possibly do His will we must hear it, and before we can hear it there must be some one to teach us, and this teacher must be sent from God. For 'how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?' But then of what use to us is it that teachers are sent us, if we will not

receive them? And is not the fact, that we receive not those whom God sends, a clear proof that there is little love for Him who sends them dwelling within our hearts? This was exactly the case, it appears, with the rich man in the parable and his five brethren. They lived without God in the world. If they owned Him with their lips, their hearts were far from Him; their lives were very different from what He delights in. His will, declared by Moses and the prophets, was a witness and a warning to them, but both the witness and the warning were alike unheeded. And this, not from any want of power or of plainness on the part of Moses and the prophets, but merely from that overwhelming love of the world and total deadness to all Divine love, which would have made them as careless to the witness of one risen from the dead, as they were unmindful of the warnings of Moses and the prophets. Had there been any sparks of heavenly love to enkindle within them, the means of grace which were provided for them would have been enough and even ample; as it was, nothing would have been sufficient. And so it always happens. If we are not what we ought to be with the means already placed before us, no additional means can ever make us

so, unless we were actually forced and driven into righteousness, as unwillingly as beasts are driven to the slaughter !

“ With regard to the love of his brother shewn by the rich man in the parable, it is more obvious how sadly wanting he was in that particular. And among the sins of which he himself repented, when it was too late, and of which he was so anxious that his brethren should be warned to repent, there is every reason to suppose that the want of love to his neighbour was one. They, like Dives, did not love God. Why should they, any more than he did, love their brethren also ? There was, it is true, a certain love of brethren shewn in the rich man’s care for those of his own flesh and blood, who were left still upon their trial in the world. And so far as it goes, though that is but a very little way, it is a pleasing and even amiable feature in his character. But it is not enough to love those only who love us, we are not allowed to shut up our bowels of compassion against other men, so long as we indulge in the mere natural feelings of kindness, which bind us to our own narrow circle of friends and relatives. One act of kindness bestowed upon a stranger,—some faithful son of Abraham, like

poor Lazarus,—for the love of God, will be more acceptable than a hundred acts of kindness bestowed upon our own kindred and family, with no better motive than the indulgence of a selfish affection. Compare this kind of selfish goodness with the love of God and of his neighbour shewn by the conduct of the very Apostle, whom we mentioned by chance, and whose memory is to-morrow celebrated by the Church. How pure was that devotion to his Maker, which led St. Barnabas to forsake all he had that he might live and die an Apostle! How holy was the spirit of that Christian love, which urged ‘the son of consolation’ to sell the land which he had, and to bring the money, and lay it at the Apostles’ feet! And how utterly unlike the feelings or doings of the rich man in the parable! And here again observe how the rich man’s faults throw light upon the grievousness of leaving undone what ought to be done, rather than on the positive sin of doing what ought not to be done. We are not told that he was an unbeliever or a blasphemer, but we can discover that there was no love of God dwelling in him, and we see the awful punishment inflicted on this his deficiency. We do not read that he was cruel or unkind to Lazarus; he made no objection to the poor

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beggar's being fed from the crumbs that fell from his table ; he did not drive him away from his gate, where he lay full of sores. No, he did his poor neighbour, so far as we are told, no harm, if he did him no good. If he did not help him, still he let him alone, just as the priest and Levite served the poor wounded man, when they passed by on the other side. But was that enough to satisfy the just claim of Heaven upon the rich man's use of the talents entrusted to his keeping ? Is not his want of love to his neighbour at least as conspicuous as his want of love to his Maker ? And who can wonder that neither the law nor the prophets, neither Gospel nor Church, neither miracle nor any other mode of imparting heavenly truth, can touch those hearts which are already seared and hardened against these two great principles which are the life of all heavenly teaching, the love of God and the love of our neighbour ?

“ Now then, James,” said the Vicar, when he had got thus far, “ I think I have answered your first question ; and you may see what the rich man 'in the parable had done to deserve the punishment he met with. A very little thought will serve to shew us that he loved no one but himself,—and that with a very short-sighted

worldly sort of love ;—that he loved neither God nor his neighbour. And as the keeping of the two great commandments to love God and our neighbour is the fulfilling of the law, so the continual neglect of these two is the ruin of all Christian obedience. But how, you further enquire, do so many Christian people, with our blessed Lord's parable and other like warnings ever sounding in their ears, desire above all things to be rich in earthly goods? It will not take long to satisfy you on this point. Oh that it were but half as easy to tear the worldly spirit out of our hearts and cast it from us, as it is to trace the way in which that spirit gets rooted and fixed there ! The very same evil disposition, which led Dives first into sin and then to torment, has led, and is still leading thousands among ourselves down the same miserable path. Men do not love God above all things. They do not love their neighbours as they love themselves. And therefore they desire above all things to be rich in earthly treasures. Why should they not, according to their own principles? For the mistake lies not so much in the conclusion they draw from their principles,—supposing those principles to be true, which they are not,—as in the principles themselves. They begin by loving the

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world, that is their first principle. And too often it to be feared, what passes for a Christian education impresses upon the mind of the child no better lesson than this. Now, if they 'love the world, the love of the Father is not in them.' It cannot be in them, for 'whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.' Well then, the habitual lover of the world, cannot love God, so; but if he loves not God, can he love his neighbour either? 'If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar;' he does not speak the truth in what he says of his love towards his heavenly Father. And why so? Because 'he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' Or how can he who does not love his brother, pretend really to love God whose commandment he thus boldly sets at nought? And this commandment have we from Him; 'that he who loveth God, love his brother also.' "

Just as sowing a field with salt makes it barren and unfruitful, so the love of the world once cherished in our souls renders them unable to bear the good fruits of love to our Maker, and love to our fellow men. God and man cannot, we know, be worshipped together; indeed, the mere attempt to do so is a

fearful insult to the former. And not only does the unclean spirit of the world, as soon as it enters into a man's heart, drive out the love of God, but, together with that, the love of our brethren,—that is to say, all Christian love,—must take its flight likewise. The world hates its Creator against whom it has rebelled, and a fierce struggle is even now going on betwixt the world and those that love their Creator. And if ever the world enslaves us, its first work is to teach us to love neither God nor the children of God; to withdraw our thoughts and affections from all that is high, and holy, and heavenly, and everlasting, and to bind them down with chains of iron, and cords of vanity, to all that is low, and grovelling, and evil, and passing away. Such was the work of ruin that the rich man in the parable had busied his whole life in preparing and completing for his own soul. Such, it is to be greatly feared, is still the awful work of numbers of those who daily read the Scriptures, who at least year by year come and listen to the warning offered them in the Gospel for the First Sunday after Trinity, and who still,—after having seen, as it were, their own reflection in that unerring glass,—go their way, utterly forgetting what manner of men they are. How long can this last! If

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The hearts of many men are so occupied with the
joy or the busy noise of the world, as to render
them deaf to all that Moses and the prophets
can say ; if their eyes are so taken up with those
pomps and vanities, which in Holy Baptism they
have solemnly renounced, as to make them un-
able to believe,—verily and truly to believe,—in
one who rose from the dead, what more is there
for them to expect or hope for ? The bearer of
the next message to them will, most likely, be
the angel of death ; and the terrors of his pre-
sence will be increased a hundredfold, when they
behold in his hand and inscribed with their own
names, a roll of a book, like Ezekiel's, written,
within and without, with “lamentations, and
mourning, and woe.”

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THE HOLY TRINITY.

GREAT God, who spake e'er worlds were made
And time its course began,
Who breathed upon the dust, and lo !
Uprose the living man,
In Thee we trust, in prayer to Thee
We lift the heart and bend the knee ;
Father of all, preserve us still,
Through change of time and chance of ill.

Son of the Father, Saviour, Lord,
Blest source of sin forgiven,
Whose love to fall'n man restored
The heritage of Heav'n,
O help us in our hour of need ;
In mercy for Thy people plead.
That when we die, O Jesu, we,
May enter into rest with Thee.

Spirit Divine ! pure Fount of Grace,
Our Comforter and Guide,
In us as in Thy dwelling place
'Midst life's dark paths abide ;
Strengthen the weak, and those that stray
Recall to wisdom's heavenly way,
That led by Thee, we best may win
Our hearts from guile, our thoughts from sin.

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Almighty One ! Eternal Trine,
That mindful art of man,
Creator, Saviour, Guide Divine !
Who may Thy myst'ry scan ?
In Thee we trust, to Thee we raise
The willing voice of grateful praise ;
Ye earthly choirs, ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

COLLECT.

O God, the strength of all them that
their trust in Thee, mercifully accept
prayers; and because through the weakness
our mortal nature we can do no good
without Thee, grant us the help of Thy
that in keeping of Thy commandments we
please Thee, both in will and deed; through
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

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Christian Fear and Love.

It is sometimes said, that if we lead what is called a good life we need not care what form of faith we profess. This of course is not what the Scripture teaches; for it assures us again and again, that we are saved through faith—the faith once delivered to the saints. At the same time, it is quite true that this faith must evidence itself by our works, otherwise we know it is dead. And it is to instruct us in both these truths, viz., that we must believe the true or Catholic faith, and live good lives in accordance with the faith we profess, that our Church in the first part of the Christian year, from Advent to Trinity Sunday, instructs us in the grounds of the faith, and in the other period, from Trinity Sunday to Advent, urges upon us the practice of the doctrines in which we have been instructed.

No wonder, then, that one of the earliest Col-

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lects in what may be called the practical portion of the Christian year, should teach us the important truth, that God never fails to govern them whom He brings up in His stedfast fear and love, and accordingly directs us to beseech Him to make us have a perpetual fear and love of His holy Name. Indeed, these are the grand principles of Gospel obedience, as our solemn Litany admonishes us when we beseech the good Lord, that it may please Him to give us an heart to love and dread Him, and diligently to live after His commandments.

And, first, let us mark the relation between fear and obedience. What is it, for instance, which makes the generality of men obey the laws of their country? Is it not fear of the power which enforces those laws, and of the penalties which follow the breaking of them. So that one of the chief principles of human government is power, power to carry out its laws, and thus to awe men into obedience. In like manner it is the fear of God which keeps us in the path of His commandments, lest we should incur the penalties denounced against disobedience by a mighty God and terrible, and whose power is infinite.

In the world, an offender's hope of escape is often stronger than the fear of punishment. But

with God all hope of escaping detection is at an end. He is all-knowing as well as Almighty, and He understands our thoughts long before we do ourselves. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," is the sentence of Him who knows our most secret sins.

So also it is said in the book of Ecclesiasticus, "Whoso feareth the Lord, it shall go well with him at the last, and he shall find favour in the day of his death." (Ecclus. i. 13.) "The fear of the Lord driveth away sins, and where it is present it turneth away wrath." (Ecclus. i. 21.) And in words which strikingly mark the connection between fear and obedience, "If thou desire wisdom, keep the commandments, and the Lord shall give her unto thee. For the fear of the Lord is wisdom and instruction." (Ecclus. i. 26, 27.)

Job, David, Solomon, witness the same truth. And in the new covenant we have our Lord Himself urging us to fear God at all hazard of worldly loss, (Matt. x. 28,) while His Apostle exhorts us to seek for grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, (Heb. xii. 28.)

Does not the whole Bible then teach us, that the more we accustom ourselves to fear God, and to realize to ourselves the terrible majesty of His

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holy Name, the more disposed we shall be to obey Him? In other words, that would we keep the commandments, we must be brought up under a stedfast fear of the power, wisdom, and justice of God?

But here it may be asked, is God to be the object of our fear only? Are we to be driven into obedience like slaves and bondsmen? This surely is to deprive obedience of its chiefest grace, for such obedience is not the ready offering of a willing heart, but a forced service. It is plain that our obedience must be of a higher kind, it must spring from love as well as fear. God requires us to obey Him as servants indeed, but as children also. We are to be followers of God as dear children. He has given us the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father. Now we all know that love is not less an element of obedience in children towards their parents than fear. A dutiful child fears parental authority. The same principle operates in God's obedient children. "Oh how I love Thy law: all the day long is my study in it." Here we have the secret of David's obedience. God's testimonies were his delight, the joy of his heart. (Ps. cxix.) Would we therefore keep God's commandments, we must love Him, tempering our

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love with godly fear, lest we sin by indulging in too familiar thoughts of Him who inhabiteth eternity, and who is the Lord of all power and might.

Let us see then how we may best by God's grace encourage these dispositions within us. And blessed be His Name we are surrounded with memorials of power and mercy for the very purpose of prompting our fear and love. When we consider the operation of His hands in the natural world, and reflect how great beyond all conception of greatness is the power which created and sustains all things in heaven and earth, we are overawed at the contemplation of the glorious attributes of Him who in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, that they never should move at any time; who decketh Himself with light as with a garment, and spreadeth out the heavens like a curtain; who layeth the beams of His chambers upon the waters, and maketh the clouds His chariots, and walketh upon the wings of the wind.

The present season of the year forces us to meditate on the power and wisdom of God in the creation. Now the earth is bringing forth her increase, the little hills rejoice on every side, *the valleys stand thick with corn, the trees of*

the wood rejoice before the Lord, and the floods clap their hands. Well may we take up the strain of the Three Children; "O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise Him, and magnify Him for ever." Yes, we have here motives both of fear and love. His mercy, not less than His power, are over all His works. He bringeth forth grass for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men, that He may bring food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make him a cheerful countenance, and bread to strengthen man's heart.

But if in God's kingdom of nature we find so many motives of fear and love, what shall we say of those motives which His kingdom of grace affords. Well might St. Paul on contemplating them exclaim, "O the depths both of the knowledge and wisdom of God: how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out."

It is indeed in the fact of God being in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, that we find the most ample scope for fear and love. How fearful to think of sin, death, judgment, and hell torments. Still joy and love come in as we contemplate Him through whom we may escape

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these fearful things. And hence perhaps it is that holy worship in God's Church on earth, the channel through which the Gospel is dispensed to man, is so intimately connected with one or other of these emotions. There is something fearful in the presence of God. Saints have ever confessed it to be so. "How dreadful is this place, this is none other but the house of God," said Jacob. At the sight of the burning bush, Moses was afraid. Fear was mixed with the worship of the earliest Christians. We read for instance, "They continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers, and fear came upon every soul." (Acts ii. 42.) While the filthy dreamers described by St. Jude are said to have defiled even the feast of charity by feeding themselves without fear, (St. Jude 12.) The offering of love must be accompanied with fear, to be acceptable to God. And doubtless hence it is, that holy service in the Church is framed with express reference to these dispositions.

And now contemplate the blessedness of these graces. The Collect assures us that God never fails to help and govern those who possess them. And we have God's own word for it: "He will *fulfil the desire of them that fear Him.* He

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also will hear their cry and will help them. The Lord preserveth all them that love Him." (Ps. cxlv. 19, 20.) And as the blessings of the Law are only shadows of those given us in the Gospel, so it is here, for our Lord Himself uses these amazing words, "If a man love Me, My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abodewith him." Now where the Father and the Son are, there also is the Spirit which proceedeth from both, so that the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity dwells with those who fear and love God's holy Name. And as God governs and indwells in such in this world, so has He prepared the inconceivable joys of the world to come, those good things which pass man's understanding, for them that love Him.

But it were dangerous, as tending to presumption, if we were to dwell only upon the privileges both in this world and in the world unseen, of those who love and fear God. Let us, as a means to awaken these graces within us, contemplate the condition of those who neither fear nor love God's holy Name. Most miserable are such, for He will not hold them guiltless that take His Name in vain. And most profanely do we take that Name in vain when we do not fear and love it. All the woes which are de-

nounced against the sinner here and hereafter, will be fulfilled on him who violates this commandment.

How strictly then should we examine ourselves as to whether we really in our hearts and lives have a perpetual fear and love of God's holy Name. O brother, whoever thou art, as thou valuest thy soul's salvation, search into thy thoughts and daily life, and test both by the fear and love of God. Dost thou think and do all things under the conviction that God is ever present with thee, knowing all thy motives and watching all thy actions? Do these attributes of the Name of God induce thee to pass the time of thy sojourning here in fear, (1 Pet. i. 17,) 'knowing that He is about thy path, and about thy bed, and spieth out all thy ways?' Who may not fear to think that the eye of the all-holy God is ever upon him? Then dost thou read that Name in the works of His creation? It is written there, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy work."

Then again, dost thou remember whose Name is marked in every page of the Bible, when thou readeſt? If thou doſt, thou wilt not use it or even touch it as a common book; but thou wilt handle *and* read it as containing the very word of

God Himself; thou wilt study it on thy knees, and meditate on it with reverence.

Knowing too the house wherein God has placed His everlasting Name, dost thou in fear worship towards the holy temple of God. It is indeed an awful thing to go to church, where we approach the all-holy God, and where He Himself and His holy angels are specially present.

“God is greatly to be feared in the council of the saints.” Well may our Prayer-book enjoin so much of reverence in our actions during divine service in God’s house. Dost thou attend to those directions of thy mother, meekly kneeling

upon thy knees, quietly standing or sitting attentively as thou art confessing, praying, praising, or hearing? If thou fearest God’s holy Name, thou wilt do so. Nay, thy very countenance will be subdued and awe-stricken as thou art worshipping that Name which is above every name.

Above all dost thou accustom thyself to fear, when, looking beyond this world, thou thinkest upon the most fearful subject of all,

That dreadful day

When heaven and earth shall pass away;

*the dread judgment? If nothing which bears
the impress of God’s holy Name on earth make*

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us to fear, we must tremble at the thought of being judged, and if dying impenitent, condemned by the Son of Man to endure the wrath of the Lamb for ever.

Then as regards thy love of God, remember that without it neither faith nor repentance avails. Without charity even St. Paul, rich in all spiritual gifts, confessed himself nothing. The repentance of Judas was without love and therefore unavailing. St. Peter added to his bitter tears his thrice repeated confession of love to the dying Saviour he had thrice denied. The woman that was a sinner had her sins that were many forgiven because she loved much. True love is the fulfilling of the Law. It is the only sign of spiritual life.

The spring of the regenerate heart,
The pulse, the glow of every part,
Is the true love of Christ our Lord,
As man embrac'd, as God ador'd.

Reader, hast thou this love burning in thy heart? Consider of what degree it must be. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, with all thy strength." In this way must thou love God's holy Name. He must be all in all to thee. But do not *rust to thy feelings*; they are often deceitful.

We must love in deed. Examine thy actions then, and see if they are influenced by this love, "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments." Think that if we love the world and the things of the world, the love of the Father is not in us. Are the things of the world enslaving thee, and making thee undervalue, as they did the guests of whom we read in to-day's Gospel, the riches of God's grace? Does thy land or oxen, merchandize, or wife or child, or any other worldly calling or relation, however in itself innocent, cause thee to reject the invitation to a supper of which this is only a shadow, the supper of the Lord, the most holy Sacrament of the Saviour's body and blood?

Know too, that if a man love God, he will love his brother also. Nay, unless a man love his brother, he cannot love God; and more awful truth still, he that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Apply then this test of thy love of God's holy Name. Art thou loving thy brother by doing all thou canst to promote his temporal and eternal good by thy money, thy time, thy example, thy prayers?

From what has been said, thou wilt understand why the Church, which at this time urges us to the practice of the truths we believe, should

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teach us to pray for a perpetual fear and love of God. They are the very essence of Christian obedience, and it is impossible to do the will of God from the heart without them. Be it thy daily prayer and endeavour to live in this fear and love all the day long.

PART II.

The Voice of Conscience.

WE read in the Epistle of the day these words, "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." Now the Apostle here speaks of our heart as though it were a kind of judge within us, accusing or excusing us according to what we have done. And so it is; our heart instructed by the Spirit of God is set as judge over us; it tells us this is right and this is wrong; when we do what God wills, then we feel in our heart that we have done right; when we do what God has forbidden, then we feel in our heart that we have done wrong. All our life through we are subject to these judgments of our heart; and God in these lesser judgments reminds us of that greater judgment of the last day, when we shall be

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judged by Him who is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things, who will judge more clearly and more strictly, who cannot be deceived nor led astray, who cannot be blinded nor confused as to what is true, who knows the heart better than the heart knows itself, and who can pass a greater sentence whether of praise or condemnation.

Indeed, it is God who now speaks through our heart or conscience, but then He will speak face to face ; now He speaks through this inward trumpet, but then He will speak with His own voice ; now He judges us by ourselves, then He will judge us by His Son our Saviour ; now He makes our heart to pass sentence upon us that we may continue in that which is good and turn away from that which is evil, but then He will Himself pass sentence upon us through His Son, after which there will be no change ; we shall not be able to mend our ways if we have done evil, neither shall we again be tempted by evil if we have done well.

Now if there is so great a judgment about to come, and also an unchangeable sentence to be passed on every one of us by the voice of Christ Himself, how great a mercy it is that we have this gift of conscience, this lesser judge seated in our

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hearts, who warns us to avoid the evil and to choose the good. As God will condemn sin, so He gives us knowledge and consciousness of sin that we may not in ignorance put our hands unto sin. We do not sin without knowing it. We speak of "the voice of conscience," of "the sting of conscience," of "the rebuke or prickings of conscience," of "the answer of a good conscience;" all these terms are good and true; they shew us what conscience is and what it does. Every man will bear witness, that a sort of inward voice has called out to him, and spoken to him, and pleaded with him, and tried to restrain him when he has turned his feet to evil ways, and commended him when he has resisted sin or done kind deeds.

Let any man say if he has been dishonest whether he did not feel he was dishonest? Was there not something like a hand laid upon him dragging his arm back from his neighbour's goods? Or when he was telling a lie, did not something seem to stop his tongue and tell him of the sinfulness of a lie? Or when he was minded to follow youthful lusts, did not his heart sometimes smite him on the way and persuade him to turn back? Or when he over-reached his neighbour, did he not feel uneasy in his gain and

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aspise himself in the very moment of his guilty access? Or when he has broken sabbaths, has he not been displeased with himself, and felt the weight hang long upon his hands and been weary of himself? Or when a man has fulfilled Christ's law has he not had great peace within himself? When he has battled with lust and turned away from the tempter's voice, has he not felt lightness of heart within him as though some good friends were speaking approving words? When he has helped a neighbour in time of need, has he not rejoiced within himself? When he has kept the sabbath and offered fervent prayer in God's house, has he not walked home with a spirit quite at ease? When he has given up his own will to be kind and generous and self-denying, has not something in his heart praised him for his well-doing, and caused him to go on his way rejoicing?

I ask you, whether you have not felt this judge within you, this voice of conscience, condemning you for that which has been done amiss, and praising you when you have obeyed the motions of the Spirit of God? A great mercy it is that our heart is thus moved to act within us as a judge; it is a great thing that we have not been able to be altogether easy under



faintest voice, who dread to disobey its whispering, and try to keep it clear from raptures and deceits. He who obeys the friend, and is easily vexed with himself and is soon grieved, and is quick to feel beginnings and first approaches of sin, is going by sure steps towards acceptance with through Jesus Christ. He is indeed wise ever communing with his own heart and himself for what he does, who stops to the thoughts and words and actions of by the holy law of Christ. It is only constant searching and judging and swe the soul, that we can keep it in any from sin ; offences like weeds are c

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god conscience. The purer we keep the chamber of our soul, the more distinct and clear does the voice of conscience become. There is the more room for the echoes and reverberations of its kindly voice; the sound is not muffled nor choked up, but comes out with all its proper strength.

We must be careful how we use our conscience, lest we weaken or stifle or pervert it. It is not such a gift that it cannot be spoilt; it is not such a friend that it cannot be rebuffed. We may so resist it as to make it speak less early; at last by resisting it for many days we may be brought not to know what it says; such confused sounds will be within us that we shall not be able to distinguish the teaching of God. We can harden our hearts by continual sin. Woe be to us if we fall into so evil a state as to hear nothing when we sin, and to feel no compunction, and to have no fears. I pray you to be very tender with your conscience, and to deal with it very tenderly; let it not speak in vain; open your ears whether it approves or blames; wince not if it blames, but hear it out; do not try to drown it, for it would be the drowning of a friend; go whither it presses you to go, go not where it seems to forbid you

and to draw you back; make not yourselves deaf, for it speaks within you for your good. God the Holy Ghost teaches your heart to lead you the closer to Christ. Though sometimes Satan may corrupt conscience, though it is not a perfect guide, yet the more we obey its earlier tones, the less will Satan be able to pervert it, the more entirely will it be instructed by the Spirit of God, the more we may trust and follow it. Listen then to your heart, to that first judge which is on the judgment seat within you, that you may escape the wrath of that greater Judge who will sift you to the very core, who knoweth all things, and will avenge Himself on all His enemies.

Tracts for the Christian Seasons.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Holy Angels.

I REMEMBER as well as though it happened yesterday, that, when quite a boy, one fine summer Sunday evening, I was sauntering round the old churchyard of my native village. The sun was going down with every promise of a glorious morrow ; the grey church-tower stood above me bathed in a rich and mellow glow of light ; the peaceful meadow, from which the grass had been newly mown, lay before me, and through it ran the deep clear stream with its placid flow, reflecting back on its surface the tall elm-trees beneath whose boughs when children we had our bower. I was alone ; and my mind was bent upon more serious thoughts than usual : and the whole scene was in perfect harmony with my feelings. I had been recently confirmed by the bishop ; that very morning had witnessed my enrolment among the privileged band of the

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Church's communicants; at the hands of the clergyman in company of my father and my mother I had received for the first time the holy Sacrament of my Saviour's Body and Blood. Never shall I forget the awful thrilling happiness of that day; how with fear and trembling, mingled with gratitude and fervent devotion, I had knelt before God's altar. Never shall I forget how keenly I felt all that the lines express—

O agony of wavering thought
When sinners first so near are brought !
It is my Maker—dare I stay ?
My Saviour—dare I turn away ?

The solemn services in which on that day I had engaged, you may suppose had not faded from my memory by the evening. Yes, well I remember the day: ~~it was~~ this very day just eighteen years ago. I remember it, it was the third Sunday after Trinity; the words of the Gospel for the day seemed to soothe my excited spirit, and cheer me at that awful moment, while they raised in my mind a train of anxious thoughts, which I knew not how to explain to myself, and which in spite of my efforts to get rid of them, would still hover round me. They were the concluding words of the Gospel for the day, which had left this deep impression

on my mind, "Likewise I say unto you, there is joy among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." The clergyman had preached from the Gospel on the subject of true repentance; he had encouraged us to it by noting how earnestly God searches for the piece of silver lost from His treasury; for the wandering sheep which strayed from His fold; how He waited not for the return of the repentant prodigal, but went out and met him when he was yet a great way off, and "fell on his neck and kissed him." He had told us to mark well how that the chapter whence the Gospel for the day was selected, gives the greatest encouragement to the true repentance of Christians who have fallen into sin. I think he called it 'a Gospel within the Gospel;' and he ended by solemnly inviting all the penitents of his flock to turn again to the Father whom they had offended, to draw near to His most holy feast, and there as sons to seek to have the pardon of their sins sealed to them in the holy Eucharist. And though he did not draw out the subject into detail, yet he added by way of encouragement that not only all good and holy men rejoiced at the accession of one new warrior to the army of their Lord, at the return of each single penitent who had strayed,

but that this joy was spread far beyond the Church on earth, and reached the holy angels in heaven.

It was on the same Sunday evening, that, as I have said, I was wandering round the old churchyard, when the clergyman entered the wicket gate and crossed the churchyard in his way to his cottage. After the interchange of a few passing remarks, upon the state of the poor sick woman whom he had been visiting, I told him openly the subject of my thoughts. We had often talked together on sacred subjects before ; it had been mainly by him that I had been prepared for the solemn rite of confirmation ; a season when many a clergyman can find access even to those who at other times would refuse it ; and I felt that I could speak to him with a freer heart and fuller confidence than to any one beside him in the world.

‘ Let us sit down here,’ he said calmly, in answer to my first word of enquiry, ‘ and employ the remainder of this glorious evening in thinking on the subject which seems so deeply to occupy your mind. We will converse upon the nature of the holy angels and their relation to *the race of man*, as far at least as it is revealed to us in the Bible. It is the subject on which I

have just been speaking to your sick neighbour : but I can never grow tired of it. Those who rest around,' he added, pointing to the graves with their fresh green turf, 'were we able to hear them now, could tell us more than we (while we are on this side of the veil of the unseen world) can ever hope to know. And as such is the case, we may be sure that there are good reasons why God does not will that we should know more than He has at present given us to know. If there be no higher reason, yet at least He may do so in order to test and to try our faith : for there is no room for faith where all things are clear to our outward senses.'

'Yes,' I answered, 'it has often struck me that this is the reason why so much is left in Holy Scripture almost purposely obscure ; rather indicated to the eye and ear of attention than openly and positively laid down. Even a hint from a tender parent, we know, should be enough for obedient children.'

'You are quite right,' he said, 'God's obedient children will readily consent to be guided by His eye, (Ps. xxxii. 9,) the merest hint of His pleasure will be enough for them. But with reference to the holy angels, I think, we *are permitted to gather from the Word of God*

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more than a few scattered hints : the Old and New Testament both make repeated mention of them, and tell us what they are suffered to do to and for man in God's Church below.'

I have not forgotten to this day the substance of our conversation : the result of it has been to lead my mind to dwell much and often from that time on the nature and office of the holy angels, and to regard it always as a doctrine which bears directly upon Christian practice. I have therefore set down in these pages a few scattered thoughts upon it, in the hope that they may be of service to some at least of you my Christian readers. You have doubtless felt with me that all that we see around us, this pleasant world, and all its sights and scenes, our very birth and life, the air which we breathe, and the food which supports us, light and darkness, cold and heat, and health and pain and sickness, all are to us a mighty mystery. We find ourselves placed by God among all these sources of happiness or sorrow, and we know not how it is. Reason alone cannot more than feebly grasp these things : and the highest flights of human learning and science can but teach us this, how very scanty is our knowledge even of those *things* which we can see and touch. All is to

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us a mystery; when we look around, we are bounded on every side by regions which we cannot penetrate, closed in by the fences of our own littleness. And just so it is with religious matters; into such matters indeed as are not among things revealed it would be sinful for man to gaze too closely: but all that we have revealed to us in God's own Word as true, all those mighty truths and doctrines of which we can find therein the slightest trace, or catch the faintest glimpse, in these we surely may find meet subjects for holy thoughts and meditation. Nay more. Far from regarding it as a sin, my friend, to search deeply into these things, it seems to me our bounden duty as God's reasonable creatures, and as redeemed men, to acquaint ourselves with the things of God, and to mark well His gracious dealings with mankind. For it is not one, or another part of Scripture, but 'all Scripture' that is 'given by inspiration' of God, and is 'able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' Whatever then we read therein, whether plainly and fully revealed, or faintly hinted, must be of some importance, whether less or greater, to men who are working out their own salvation here with *fear and trembling*; and all that we can gather,

however indirectly, from the same great fountain head, must have its weight and influence in moulding and fashioning our inner spiritual life.

Now the doctrine of the holy angels has ever seemed to me to be one of the less prominent doctrines of Holy Writ ; but for all that it is a doctrine still : and what is more, a doctrine on which at times every Christian man must think and feel ; and from which in every season of joy or trouble, of fierce conflict with sin, of partial enslavement under it, or of victory over it, the really religious mind may derive a most blessed strength and a most wholesome comfort.

The angels act as the messengers and ministers of God to man ; they ever stand crowding in His heavenly courts and wait upon His will, as servants to do His pleasure. They are spirits, and because they dwell in heaven must be pure and holy : they are called ‘angels of light,’ ‘angels of God,’ the ‘chariots’ which bear Him through the heavens. They do His will in heaven with ready and willing hearts. They are ‘holy angels,’ and man is “a little lower” than they : in their presence is joy felt, as we heard to-day, over one sinner that repenteth ; they watch as guardians over Christian men and Christian children, to shield them from sin

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and harm, to do good to them in body and in soul. We doubt not that in some high and mysterious manner they are bound to us Christians in the communion of saints; most really and truly are they present with us in our churches, when we daily pour forth our earnest confession of sin and chant our creed; and especially when we join with angels and arch-angels, and with all the host of heaven, in lauding and magnifying God's glorious Name. In the courts of heaven they ever behold with an ecstasy of love and joy 'the face' of their King our Father; and we are told that in the last day they shall come from heaven with the Son of Man our Saviour and our Judge, and shall sever the wicked from the good, and bear them away to eternal joy or eternal punishment.

Such seems to be a summary of what the Bible tells us concerning the nature and office of the holy angels. Let us, in the second place, sum up for our comfort, some of the most marked occasions on which angels are recorded to have exercised their ministry to man in Holy Scripture.

II. First then, no sooner had Adam fallen, and been condemned to eat bread in the sweat of his brow, than 'the Lord,' we are told, 'drove

out the man, and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.' We read nothing more of the work of angels till after the flood; two angels came to Sodom at even as Lot sat at the gate of the city, and warned him to depart from the accursed place. And when Hagar fled from the face of her mistress Sarah, and she cast away her child to die in the wilderness of Beersheba, the angel of God called unto her from heaven, and bade her return home cheered with the promise of a son whose seed should be a mighty nation. When Abraham was about to slay his son Isaac a willing sacrifice in the land of Moriah, 'the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven,' and bade him to stay his hand; and when he obeyed His voice, declared that in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed. And, to take but a few out of the many instances of angels' ministry, we are told that Jacob, when fearful of his brother's anger he lay down to sleep on his way to Haran, "dreamed and beheld a ladder set up upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold the angels of God were ascending upon it;" and behold "the Lord Himself stood above it."

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Again, when Jacob went away from Laban, "the angels of God met him; and when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host." It was God's angel too that stood in the way for an adversary against Balaam, when he went on his message with the servants of Balak. "The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour," and gave him a sign from heaven by touching his sacrifice and consuming it with fire. An angel came from God to the wife of Manoah, Samson's mother, and told her of the future birth of a son, and went up again to heaven in the flame of the altar. But we will not dwell further on these examples, in which God is said to have revealed His will to men under the old covenant, by the agency of His ministering spirits.

Let us then pass at once to the New Testament, and mark what influence and power the holy angels are said to have over the hearts and deeds of men under the Gospel. We shall see that the office of angels has been no less wonderful than it was before Christ came down upon earth. It was, as you know, an angel that was sent to Zacharias with the promise of a son, the forerunner of our Lord, while he was burning

incense in the temple of the Lord ; it was the angel Gabriel that was sent from God to bear to the Blessed Virgin His gracious word of prophetic assurance, " Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God : and behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus." And it was a band and multitude of the heavenly host, that suddenly appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ' Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.' And when our Blessed Saviour had been made flesh and dwelt among us, the ministry of angels was not withdrawn ; when in His infinite wisdom and for our sakes He retired into the secret wilderness, there to prevail over the serpent in successful combat ; when in the might of God's Word He had thrice repelled the tempter, then 'angels came and ministered unto Him.' And in the garden of Gethsemane, hard by the mount of Olives, when for us He bore the weight of His Father's anger, and as man drank to the dregs the bitter cup of human bodily suffering ; when in the intensity of His agony, ' His sweat was as it were large drops of blood falling to the ground,' there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven ' strengthening Him.' And when the victory over death and hell

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had been achieved, and our blessed Saviour rose triumphant from the grave, two men in white garments stood by the side of that faithful band who had early repaired to their Master's tomb, and bade them 'seek' not 'the living among the dead.' Nor did their ministry end here: for when a cloud had received the Lord out of the sight of His disciples, "behold two men stood by them in white apparel," who testified of the future coming of Christ in glory. The angel of the Lord too opened the prison doors, and brought forth thence God's chosen Apostles, and bade them go stand and speak in the temple all the words of this life. Cornelius the Centurion was warned by a holy angel to send for St. Peter and receive him into his house: and when the Apostle was thrown into prison and lay 'between two soldiers, bound by two chains,' the angel of the Lord came upon him and raised him up, and struck from off his hands those heavy chains, and led him through the city gate. And lastly, when St. Paul and his companions were in danger of shipwreck on their way to Rome, there stood by him at night the angel of God, saying, "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar, and lo! God hath given *thee all them that sail with thee.*"

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III. Now, Christian reader, let us together draw out into detail a few points which these remarks will readily suggest.

And first, I would ask you this question. If God has thus often and thus mightily been pleased to work His ways upon man, through the agency of His angels; if as the Psalmist says, they tarry around them that fear God to shield and succour them in the hour of temptation, to bid their hearts rejoice even in sufferings, to inspire them with good hopes, good thoughts, and good desires, will you, my brother in Christ, cherish the proud spirit of a Sadducee, and refuse to believe what God has so plainly revealed, and with him say 'that there is neither angel nor spirit?' Oh! that we had the faith to believe this doctrine more practically! to realize it in our daily lives, and to act as though we each had a guide from God ever present at our right hand! Oh! that we all of us had that simple childlike faith which would lead us to hold every portion of God's written word to be literally and strictly true! Let us as very members of the Church of Christ, learn to despise our own reasonings when they would set us to question the Word of God. Let us not be puffed up with the littleness of our own knowledge, or rashly strive to reduce to the

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standard of sensible proof those things which God has been pleased to leave wrapped in the awfulness of a mystery. But while we shrink from making ourselves wise above that which is written, let us hold to the faith and creed of the Apostle Paul, and say, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."

And my friend, are not you an heir of salvation? and if so, then have not these 'ministering spirits' a special charge over you? do they not bear into your soul from God those good and holy thoughts, to which you must well know and feel that your own heart alone could never have given birth? Does not the doctrine of the holy angels now strike your mind as something more than a dry unmeaning statement? Surely, whoever you may be, high or low, rich or poor, young or old, parent or child, it does concern you most closely. No doctrine of the Holy Bible can be profitless; and surely few can be of greater profit than this. Bear with me then if I draw out for you some few reflections which by the grace of God may be blessed to your soul's health and comfort.

First then, it should lead you to believe in the *reality of the strife* which you are waging here

as a soldier and servant of the cross. The angels, as I have told you, are not mere creatures of our mind, but real existing persons. What though they have not a material body and gross earthly forms and senses, such as we have here, yet no less are they living persons. They are spirits. The angels of God *live*, the fallen angels live also. 'The prince of that fearful band still "walketh about" this lower earth "seeking whom he may devour;"' as really and as truly is he present among us, as though we saw him with our eyes. And therefore, if our ghostly enemies be real enemies, and God's angels real allies, how great, how very great does that struggle seem to be in which each regenerate man has been engaged even from his earliest childhood, that contest between good and evil in which he is bound to fight manfully under Christ's banner, if he would regard and fulfil his baptismal vow ! Till he has done this with all his heart and soul, he can scarcely be called God's 'faithful' soldier and servant : all that he may talk of heaven is but a dream ; for he that hath put his hand to the plough and then looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of God. Christian reader, this is the strife in which you are already engaged ; the devil and all the hosts

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darkness would fain make your soul once in their prey: when you were a very little infant, that soul was once rescued from their power; it was taken from their hands, and placed within the fold of Christ's holy Church, in order that so it might be saved through Him forever. But against every member of that Church Satan wages an incessant war; the conflict is most real. It is true that the warfare is a carnal one; we cannot see our foes; but we must not on that account the less believe that they live and fight against us. It is a long and weary contest, one which will never be ended on this side the grave: in it we each must conquer or be conquered.

Again, this blessed doctrine should comfort and console us here below. As each new-born infant is rescued from the jaws of that roaring lion, by being placed as a sheep to the fold of Christ's Church; here is joy in the presence of the angels of God." As each member of that holy band meets one single assault of Satan, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God." And when a single sheep, having given place to sin, has wandered from the fold, and erred and strayed upon the mountains of the world, then *the first sign of a true repentance, when the*

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lost one begins to return to his Father's home, when he forsakes the sinful life which he has led, and confesses his sin, and seeks to be brought back again and to be at peace with God, then too "there is joy among the angels of heaven." Being members of the same Church with us, they are present when the lost one is admitted to the banquet of his Father's table; they are present and rejoice. Surely then we should learn to take comfort from a doctrine such as this. For they are 'ministering spirits,' and they minister to us on God's behalf. We may not doubt that they watch over every adopted member of God's family here on earth; that they are ready to succour him when assaulted by the hosts of the evil one. We are not alone, and it is not alone that we must enter upon the fearful contest. Ours is the vantage ground: and here is our comfort: God's angels are ever at our side to aid us, if we will have but the faith to believe them present. Were our faith but strong in God and in His word, like the servant of the man of God, we too might have our eyes opened, and be comforted to see the mountains that are around us covered with their legions. And in that case we should have good cause to take courage and 'fear not; for they that be

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with us are more than they that are against us.'

And again, this doctrine should teach us the lessons of true humility, and faith, and love. For what am I, and what are you, and what are all the sons of men, that such mighty means have been devised, nay, and are still employed by God, to compass His own most merciful ends in us, to aid us in working out our own salvation? Who are we, that they who wait about the courts of their King, should deign to take heed of us, to succour us in our dangers, to weep in our sorrow, to rejoice in our success? 'Lord, what is man that Thou art thus mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou so regardest him?' And if God has given us this earnest that He would have us saved from death and hell, and thus furnished us with aid in our conflict with Satan, should not the faith of our hearts be enlarged, that we may be able to place a firmer trust in Him, and to believe that He will never leave us nor forsake us? Should not new fires of love be kindled in our hearts, at this token of a Father's loving care? And should not this firm faith in Him who is the great "Captain of our salvation," work a mighty work within us? Should it not lead those of us who are fallen

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to a speedy repentance, and those of us who by God's grace still stand, more strongly to resist the carnal desires of the flesh, and the pomps and vanities of a wicked world, to love God more entirely in return for so great proof of His wondrous love; and to love our brethren for His sake?

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